The Problem of Identifying
the Semantic Situation of Apology
(Based on Modern British Literature)

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As far as is known, speech means of apology are used in natural communication in many, if not all, linguocultures. The formulas of apologies fulfil an important social function that is the restoration of social balance and harmony between the participants of verbal interaction. It is a well-known fact that communication formulas with the semantics of apology are most often used to express an apology itself. However, due to their polysemous nature, they also express other meanings. The use of formulas of apology in different linguocultures is extremely various. They can be used for the implementation of many other communication purposes. In this paper we consider the application of the formulas of apology in British linguoculture.

Traditional linguistic analysis, which is focused on studying a single linguistic formula, usually does not take into account its nearest context environment, conditions and socio-cultural specifics of use and, as a consequence, does not identify the real communicative value of this formula in natural communicative environment. Meanwhile, linguistic formulas with the semantics of apology are widely used in English-speaking cultures to express the meanings which are not directly related to apology, such as regret, sympathy, condolence, outrage and others. However, despite a fairly long tradition of studying apologies, neither domestic nor foreign linguistics has presented a specific research on the functioning of the formulas of apology in different conditions of communication and their use as implementation tools of a number of different speech acts so far (Pletneva, 2009). Moreover, another problem is the area of research on identifying and studying semantic situations with formulas of apologies or semantic situations of apology, as well as the translation of these formulas and situations into other languages taking into account the cultural specificities of the country of the target language.

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This article analyzes the semantic situations of apology in British linguoculture based on the novel "Bridget Jones's Diary» by the modern British author Helen Fielding.

Introduction

Semantic and social-behavioral situations of "blame", "apology", "regret" and others that arise during verbal communication between people and are generated by means of performatives, are increasingly becoming the subject of the current research of many linguists. The analysis of these situations as complex pragmasemantic structures involves complex using and interdisciplinary interaction of different theories relating to the sections of linguistics, namely pragmatics, semantics and syntactics. The last decades are characterized by a significant interest in the problems of studying syntactic semantics, which is a special area of the theory of syntax, considering structures of the meaning of the whole sentence, and semantic situations, which are formed on the basis of these meanings.

In this study, we consider the semantic situation of "apology" as a separate semantic unit having a complex pragmasemantic structure that can be described through different typologies. In other words, the semantic situation of "apology" is an integrated unit consisting of semantic structures of individual words organizing a statement, statements forming sentences, and sentences united in a common sense. Therefore, the semantic structure of a single word, as well as the semantic structure of statements and sentences that are part of a semantic situation, requires a separate study.

The semantic situation is one of the key concepts of semantic syntax. It came to the attention of the majority of linguists in the middle of the XXth century, immediately after the publication of the works of Ch. Bally about dictum and modus as the objective and subjective in the sentence. Ch. Bally said that a statement makes sense when it contains information about the world or objective reality which can be connected to the information coming from the speaker. This information is subjective (Bally, 1955). An interesting interpretation of the semantic situation is offered by V.S. Khrakovskii, who believes that "the semantic structure of the sentence is a fragment of reality, cut and processed by a thought and a language, which is usually called an individual denotative situation or event" (Khrakovskii, 1972). The concept of the semantic situation thus affects the three aspects: extralinguistic reality, thinking and language.

The problem of the systematization of the semantic situation's definition is also developed in the works of V.B. Kasevich who divides semantic situations into denotative and significative ones. As for the first type, he defines such situations as certain elements of the extralinguistic reality, which are described by an individual statement; the latter are defined as the content of the statement, that highlights some "scene" of the described reality and is presented as a semantic equivalent to a denotative situation (Kasevich, 1988). A new aspect is the study of the semantic situation in the context of literary translation, first proposed by V.A. Razumovskaya (Razumovskaya, 2011).

The study of the semantic situation in its proper functioning in a live speech obliges to turn to the study of the semantic structure of sentences as part of the situation, which is based on lexical and grammatical compatibility of the members of these sentences. For example, the structure of an English sentence, as you know, has a number of features associated with the use of articles, pronouns, word order, and correct verb tense. All these features should be taken into account when considering the semantic structure of the sentence.

Basic formulas of apology in English and their use in a variety of communicative situations

In English, we can identify five key lexical items to express the semantics of apology, which are part of the formula of apology: *sorry, pardon, forgive, apologize, excuse*. Obviously, a number of factors should be noted as a prerequisite for the use of a particular formula of apology in a communicative situation: the presence of harm done to the addressee by the speaker, the speaker's awareness of the responsibility for what happened, the psychological discomfort the speaker feels and the desire to restore communicative harmony. In this case, we can talk about so-called real apologies or essential apologies (Moseiko, 2005).

However, in real communication the formulas of apology are not always used to express only the semantics of apology. In this regard, a number of the issues related to the functioning of the formulas of apology in various conditions of real communication still arouse interest. First of all, it should be noted that the semantic field of apology includes a variety of cognitive features, making possible the functioning of the formulas of apology as a means of expression of regret, sympathy, condolence, cutting into a conversation, interrupting communication, expression of indignation, establishment of the communicative nature of communication, a request to repeat something said before. In other words, the formulas of apology may be used to achieve different illocutionary purposes in different communicative situations. Such apologies are formal or conventional (Moseiko, 2005).

If we talk about apology as a speech act, it should be noted that apology is an expressive speech act. It is directly linked to keeping up communicative distance, and, obviously, should be seen in the paradigm of the strategy of courtesy, as the main pragmatic purpose of apology is to convince addressees that they are respected and that the speaker wants to be in a conflict-free relationship with them.

We have analyzed the formulas of apology and semantic situations of apology which include these formulas in the novel "Bridget Jones's Diary" by the modern British author Helen Fielding (Fielding, 1997). The analysis allowed us to offer the following classification of apology situations:

1) Apologies caused by the speaker's guilt (real apology):

She seemed to manage to kiss me, get my coat off, hang it over the banister, wipe her lipstick off my cheek and make me feel incredibly guilty all in one movement, while I leaned against the ornament shelf for support.

'*Sorry*. I got lost. '

'Lost? Durr! What are we going to do with you? Come on in! '

or

'Please,' pressed Simon. 'I've never danced with an older woman before. Oh, gosh, *I'm sorry*, I did not mean. . . 'He went on, seeing my face. 'I mean, someone who's left school,' he said, seizing my hand passionately. '

2) Apology caused by the speaker's awareness of the responsibility for what happened (real apology):

In alarm I quickly looked round for Dad but could not see him anywhere. I saw Mark Darcy talking to Una and gesturing in my direction then Una, looking purposeful, hurried across to me.

'Bridget, *I am* so *sorry* about the mix-up over the fancy dress,' she said. 'Mark was just saying you must feel dreadfully uncomfortable with all these older chaps around. Would you like to borrow something? '

3) Apology as a consequence of the speaker's feeling psychological discomfort (conventional apology):

Deciding there was no time to dial in 1471, I quickly checked the cupboard where he keeps the duvet for the sofabed – no human habitation – then followed him to the kitchen, pulling open the door of the hall cupboard as I passed at which the ironing board fell out, followed by a cardboard box full of old 45s which slithered out all over the floor.

'What are you doing?' said Daniel mildly again, coming out of the kitchen.

'**Sorry**, just caught the door with my sleeve, I said. just on my way to the loo. '

4) Apologies for causing concern to the addressee, the demonstration of a polite tone (conventional apology):

The second I put the phone down I realized it was an emergency and rang Tom, who calmly said leave it to him: if he made several calls to the machine he could find the code which would let him play back and erase the message. Eventually he thought he'd cracked it, but unfortunately Daniel then answered the phone. Instead of saying, '**Sorry**, wrong number,' Tom hung up.

or

... And after a few minutes more, he replied.
Message Jones

Sorry to interrupt, Jones, pressure must be hellish. Over and out.

PS. I like your tits in that top.
Cleave

5) Apology as empathy (conventional apology):

'Oh my Cod, it's eleven o'clock,' shrieked Woney. 'The babysitter!' and they all leapt to their feet and started getting ready to go home.

'God, **sorry** about that lot. Will you be OK, hon? ' whispered Magda, who knew how I was feeling.

6) Apology as regret (conventional apology):

'Well, that you're a radical feminist and have an incredibly glamorous life. . . '

'Oooh,' I purred.

. . . with millions of men taking you out. '

'Huh.'

'I heard about Daniel. **I'm sorry**. '

'I suppose you did try to warn me,' I muttered sulkily. 'What have you got against him, anyway?'

7) Apology to maintain the harmony of communication, to keep up a polite tone (conventional apology):

Like a fool I went for a drink with him to the American Bar at the Savoy, let him soften me up with champagne and 'I feel so terrible I really miss you blar blar blar.' Then the very second he got me to admit, 'Oh, Daniel, I miss you too,' he suddenly went all patronizing and businesslike and said, 'The thing is, Suki and I. . . '

Suki? Pukey, more like, 'I said, thinking he was about to say,' are brother and sister, '' cousins, '' bitter enemies, 'or' history. ' Instead he looked rather cross.

'Oh, I can not explain,' he said huffily. 'It's very special.' I stared at him, astonished at the audacity of his volte-face.

'**I'm sorry**, love,' he said, taking out his credit card and starting to lean back to get the attention of the waiter, 'but we're getting married.'

or

There was a queue outside a Portaloo, and I joined it, shaking. Suddenly, just when it was almost my turn, I felt a hand on my arm. It was Daniel.

'Bridge, what are you doing here?'

'What does it look like?' I snapped. '**Excuse me**, I'm in a hurry.'

or

Mum just rang. 'Oh, hello, darling. Guess what? Penny Husbands-Bosworth is on Newsnight !!! '

'Who?'

'You know the Husbands-Bosworths, darling. Ursula was in the year above you at the High School. Herbert died of leukaemia. . . '

'What?'

'Do not say "what", Bridget, say "*pardon*". The thing is I'm going to be out because Una wants to see a slide show of the Nile so Penny and I wondered if you'd record it. . . Ooh, better dash – there's the butcher! '

8) Apology to establish primary communication with the addressee (conventional apology):

Called Tom in paranoid desperation to see if he wanted to go out tonight.

'*Sorry*,' he chirped, 'I'm taking Jerome to the PACT party at the Groucho Club.'

or

'*Excuse me*, does the word' queue 'mean anything to you?' I said in a hoity-toity voice, turning around to look at him.

The examples of the semantic situation of apology represented in the book which we chose to analyze and fit in the proposed classification allow concluding that the British language culture to a greater extent is characterized by emphatic apologies (i.e. stressed courteous expression of regret on the part of the person who caused the damage to the addressee) and phatic apologies (used exclusively as a means of establishing a speech contact). British «*sorry*» is often used to keep up a polite tone, maintain harmony of interpersonal communication, or is a factor of success in linguistic communication. However, we should not forget that in modern English «*sorry*» is also often used for its "direct" intended purpose. That is why it is important and simply necessary to define and identify the semantic situation of apology and its presupposition properly for a complete and adequate understanding of the nature of communication, the purpose of the use of a particular formula with the semantics of apology, as well as for the correct translation of the text from one language into another. Each researcher determines the boundaries of the semantic situation which they need for a holistic understanding of the nature of communication. Generally, these boundaries are not limited to a single formula and its immediate surroundings. It is necessary to study the whole context in which the identification of the semantic situation takes place.

In addition, the linguistic formulas with the semantics of apology can not be used in various types of speech situations with synonymous meanings, as each of the linguistic formulas has its own communicative meaning and, in fact, the scope of use. E.A. Pletneva says on this subject as follows: "In the study of this phenomenon it is not enough to examine the semantics of an isolated linguistic form, as its adequate description requires taking into consideration not only the language semantics of each of these forms, but above all the extralinguistic factors affecting their use in real communication" (Pletneva, 2009). These extralinguistic factors include the following factors: the purpose of the speaker, their opinions and system of values, their knowledge about the world, education, age, or any life situation. Taking into account all these factors, the speaker selects one or another suitable lexical item, grammatical forms and structures in some particular situation.

According to the study, it is found out that the most commonly used speech formula of apology in modern English communication is the formula *sorry / I'm sorry*. T.V. Larina believes that in this case such a feature of English behavior as nonimpositiveness is manifested. In other words, this is aloofness or the avoidance of a direct impact on the addressee. The speech formula *I'm sorry* is aimed exactly at the speaker. It expresses the speaker's regret; as a result, the speaker apologizes in an indirect way. This formula is a formal token of courtesy, which expresses the

speaker's regret, and this regret does not enjoin them on anything. The formula of apology ***I'm sorry*** is the most frequent language means which nearly lost the semantic meaning. This formula is often used simply as a signal for attention. The frequency of use and the semantic emptiness of this linguistic formula may surprise a Russian-speaking person. "The book of etiquette says that ***sorry*** is one of the most used words in the English language that is heard everywhere; for some reason best known to themselves, the English as a nation, frequently apologize both for real manifestations of disrespect, and for the imaginary ones" (Larina, 2009).

The speech formula ***excuse me*** is a second frequently used one in the studied text. This formula is imperative; unlike the formula ***I'm sorry***, it contains an inducement to the addressee. This formula, in addition to its intended purpose, namely the expression of apology, is mainly used to attract attention, or to pay attention to any negative action.

The formula ***pardon*** with the semantics of apology appears in the studied text only a few times in absolutely identical semantic and communicative situations. The formulas of apology with this lexical item in British English are very conventional, as a rule, they are used in a situation of the speaker's misunderstanding of what is happening, or in order to ask to repeat or clarify the above.

The text under study found no situations with the use of the formulas with such lexical items as ***apologize*** and ***forgive***. It is possible that one of the reasons of this established fact is an easy, comedy genre of the book not implying excessive dramatics of the situations of apology.

In response to the apology, people belonging to British culture, try to convince "the man-offender" in the fact that the relationship is not spoiled. T.V. Larina said: "In response to the apology English communicants emphasize the

insignificance of the damage caused or brought inconvenience and readily assure the recipient that the shaky balance of the relationship is restored. The most conventional responds are: ***ok (it's ok); that's (it's) all right; no problem; do not worry; never mind*** (Larina, 2009).

Semantic situation of apology as a translation neo-unit

The process of transformation, which is traditionally considered from the point of linguistic science as the essence of cross-language translation, implies the obligatory presence of operating units in the process. The problem of the identification of translation units remains one of the most complex and controversial issues of modern translation theory (Razumovskaya, 2013). According to the majority of translation researchers, the question of the translation unit has not received a single solution so far (Garbovskii, 2004). However, modern researchers indisputably recognize the existence of such a universal translation category as "translation unit", which possesses ontological reality and existing entity.

One of the most widely used definitions is the definition of the translation unit as a dynamic, processual unit, in reference to which a translator makes their decision about the further translation (Minyar-Beloruchev, 1996). The volume of the translation unit, as well as its belonging to a certain language level, is characterized by a high degree of variability and mobility. While extracting the information from the original literary text, the translator usually uses units of various volumes. When the translator examines the original text for the first time and subsequently, they extract the information both from the whole text, and from superphrasal entities, sentences, words, morphemes, sound combinations and individual sounds presented in it (Razumovskaya, 2013). Considering the perception of the original text, R.K. Minyar-Beloruchev writes that the translator

"perceives the meaningful unity, and only then, in the translation process, splits it up into parts, depending on the actions which they are forced to take in order to carry out the task" (Minyar-Beloruchev, 1996). The translator's repeated reference to the literary original text and the recurrence of the translation process involves the possibility of the existence of a variable number of translation units of one text at different times of the translation and provided by different translators. The volume and size of these units are also various.

A certain change in the paradigm of modern translation studies, which occurred as a result of achievements' accumulation in translation practice (especially literary one) and new theoretical understanding of the traditional problems of translation (in the context of an integrative approach), allowed expanding the list of possible translation units. The category of translation neo-units can also include the semantic situation (Razumovskaya, 2010; Razumovskaya, 2011). Being one of the key concepts of semantic syntax, the semantic situation has become a regular linguistic subject since linguists learnt about the innovative ideas of Ch. Bally. The Swiss linguist introduced the concept of dictum and modus (the objective and subjective in the sentence) in the scientific use, as well as the concept of the semantic situation (Bally, 1955).

The researchers note that the most important achievement of semantic syntax was the realization of the following fact: "the meaning of the sentence is not the sum of its constituent words, it is a kind of special formation, which has its own organization, dictating its demands to lexis and morphological forms, causing them to act in certain meanings, sometimes "forcing" them to get meanings which are not too typical for them as it may seem" (Shmeleva, 1994). The semantic situation appears to be a language representative of an extralinguistic (denotative) situation and a

fragment of the linguistic view of the world, and reflects various manifestations of human life and environment. The semantic situation can have a simple or complex scenario nature and can be organized with or without account of national specificities and stereotypes (Kirsanova, 2009).

All this fully refers to the problems of the definition of the semantic situation of apology as a translation neo-unit and is very important **for** an adequate translation of the original text. As noted above, a single word or formula with the semantics of apology is not sufficient for complete understanding of the author's idea. That is why it is important to define the scope and boundaries of a text segment with an apology formula containing all the necessary linguocultural features, extralinguistic factors and other information which is necessary for the translator to do a quality and adequate translation. The semantic situation is a new, unexplored unit in literary translation. Modern researchers have only recently dared to define it as a neo-unit without making categorical definitions. That is why every scientist or translator is free to determine its borders, thus bringing new knowledge in the field of the study of the semantic situation of apology.

Conclusion

Formulas of apology are an integral part of the modern style of the British linguistic communication. The source selected for the study demonstrates the use of the formulas of apology in most cases to maintain the harmony of communication, keep up a polite tone, or signal cutting into / starting a conversation. So, the presence of the formulas of apology with such words as *sorry*, *excuse* or others does not always mean the purpose of the speaker to apologize for the discomfort or damage. For the correct interpretation of the author's intent it is necessary to study the environment of this formula, the context of use, to apply the knowledge about the

cultural specificity of the language of the native speaker. In other words, it means determining the semantic situation of apology.

The advancement of the semantic situation as a translation neo-unit allows avoiding a secondary literary text of isomeric type, when the units of the original text are recreated in the translation, but their functional unity is not saved. It is the account of the characteristics of the semantic situation that contributes to the reconstruction of the structural elements of the original text and their functional characteristics in the translation.

The context of cross-language translation supposes some variation of the semantic situation. It is caused by the natural linguistic and cultural asymmetry, as well as the peculiarities of the translator's perception of the original text. The accuracy and adequacy of presenting cultural features of the semantic situation in translation are necessary for the preservation of a cultural flavor of the original literary text, especially it refers to the text, which is traditionally and rightly defined as "the encyclopedia of Russian life" (Razumovskaya, 2013).

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Проблема выделения
семантической ситуации извинения
(на материале современной британской литературы)

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Как известно, речевые средства извинения используются в естественном общении во многих, если не во всех, лингвокультурах. Формулы извинения выполняют важную социальную функцию: восстановление социального баланса и гармонии между участниками речевого взаимодействия. Известно, что коммуникативные формулы с семантикой извинения чаще всего употребляются для выражения собственно извинения. Однако ввиду своей полисемантичности они выражают и другие значения. В самых разных лингвокультурах употребление формул извинения крайне вариативно, они могут использоваться для реализации многих других коммуникативных целей. В этой статье мы рассмотрим применение формул извинения в британской лингвокультуре.

Ключевые слова: современная британская лингвокультура, формулы извинения, семантическая ситуация, семантическая ситуация извинения, классификация извинений.

Научная специальность: 10.00.00 – филологические науки.