Pragmatic Communicative Failures

Dubtsova Olga

Ph.D. in Philology, Associate Professor at the

Department of Pedagogy, Foreign Philology and Translation of

Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics

Kharkiv, Ukraine

The goal of the present paper is to discover the roots of communicative failures caused by pragmatic factors.

The study has been carried out on the basis of integration approach to language understanding, within which a body of conceptual content associated with a lingual unit used by the speaker in the act of communication is regarded as raw material for contextualized interpretation and communication is viewed as an interactive interpersonal activity (both verbal and non-verbal) of working out common guidelines in life on the basis of common meaning creation (A. V. Kravchenko [1], W. Croft [4], A. P. Martynyuk [2], M. Turner [13], M. Tomasello [12], G. Fauconnier [5]).

Interactive methodological framework of the research stipulates interactive understanding of semiosis as a process in which a lingual unit functions as a sign (Ch. Morris [3]), that is, becomes semiotic only in the act of communication bearing in mind a conventional conceptual content, evoked by the utterance, encyclopedic knowledge, which includes this conceptual content (a concept) as well as other contextual parameters of lingual and extra-lingual context of a communicative act, influencing interpretation (W. Croft [4], G. Lakoff [8], R. Langacker [9], M. Turner [13], Ch. Fillmore [6], G. Fauconnier [5]).

A communicative failure is viewed as a speech-behavioral act, where there is no semiosis (the addresser's verbal and/or non-verbal utterance does not evoke any conventional conceptual content in the addressee's mind) or there is ambivalent semiosis (the addresser and addressee privilege different aspects of the conceptual

content structured by different frames (scripts)/domains, which results in the divergence between the addressee's inferences and addresser's presuppositions).

Based on the subject area of encyclopedic knowledge, contributing to the interpretation, we distinguish the following communicative failures caused by the absence/differences in structures of communicants': a) ontological knowledge (entities and cause and effect relations between entities and social relationships between people), b) ethological knowledge (ethic norms and values) and c) lingua-ethological knowledge (rules of communicative behaviour).

As the analysis of empirical material, represented by 1000 instances of communicative failures extracted from American situation comedy series, suggests, pragmatic communicative failures result from differences in structures of communicants' lingua-ethological encyclopedic knowledge. Such differences stem from centrality (R. Langacker [9]) misbalance in structures of encyclopedic knowledge serving as a background for producing/interpreting a verbal/non-verbal utterance based on the specificity of communicants' experience influencing the content and structure of encyclopedic knowledge evoked by a verbal/non-verbal utterance in the process of interaction.

Lingua-ethological encyclopedic knowledge provides for observing principles of interpersonal rhetoric, encompassing H. P. Grice's Cooperative Principle [7] and G. Leech's Politeness Principle [10], as well as D. Sperber and D. Wilson's Relevance Theory [11].

A key reason for pragmatic communicative failures is the violation of Relevance Theory principles due to a disregard of lingual and extra-lingual context of a communicative act.

It has been proved that pragmatic communicative failures result from false interpretation of homonymous verbal utterances, utterance implicatures enabling both literal and metaphorical interpretation or implicatures connected with recognizing irony/sarcasm as well as the addresser's communicative intentions and utterance addressing.

References:

1. Кравченко А. В. О традициях, языкознании и когнитивном подходе. Горизонты современной лингвистики: Традиции и новаторство: сб. в честь Е. С. Кубряковой. М.: Языки славянских культур, 2009. С. 51–65.

2. Мартинюк А. П. Перспективи дискурсивного напряму дослідження концептів. *Вісник Харківського національного університету імені В. Н. Каразіна. Серія : Романо-германська філологія. Методика викладання іноземних мов.* 2009. № 837. С. 14–18.

3. Моррис Ч. У. Основания теории знаков. Семиотика / под ред. Ю. С. Степанова. М.: Радуга, 1983. С. 37–89.

4. Croft W., Cruse D. A. Cognitive linguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 356 p.

5. Fauconnier G. Mappings in thought and language. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1997. 205 p.

6. Fillmore Ch. Frames and the semantics of understanding. *Quaderni di Semantica.* 1985. Vol. 6, № 2. P. 222–253.

7. Grice H. P. Logic and conversation. *Syntax and Semantics*. N.Y.: Academic Press, 1975. Vol. 3. Speech acts. P. 25–69.

8. Lakoff G. What is a conceptual system? The Nature and Ontogenesis of Meaning / ed. by Willis F. Overton, David S. Palermo. New Jersey Hove : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994. P. 41–86.

9. Langacker R. W. Foundations of cognitive grammar. Stanford: SUP, 1987. Vol. 1. Theoretical Prerequisites. 516 p.

10. Leech G. Principles of pragmatics. L.: Longman, 1983. 250 p.

11. Sperber D., Wilson D. Relevance: communication and cognition. Oxford; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995. 326 p.

12. Tomasello M. Constructing a language: a usage-based theory of language acquisition. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003. 388 p.

13. Turner M. Reading minds: the study of English in the age of cognitive science. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991. 318 p.