Review

by

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regarding

the PhD dissertation of Zheny Filipova Koleva

Strategies for expressing politeness in the modern Spanish language

for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the professional field 2.1. Philology, scientific specialty "Romance Languages" - Syntax and pragmatics of the Spanish language

The documentation provided by the applicant includes all the necessary documents and materials for participation in the competition and fully meets the procedural requirements of the Law for Development of the Academic Staff

The dissertation of Zheny Koleva is dedicated to an interesting and I would say eternal topic – politeness strategies. It was developed on the basis of Spanish language material. I am not a specialist in this language and therefore I will pay attention primarily to the theoretical aspect of the work. It deserves special attention because it is well developed and correctly distributed into three chapters, which consistently reveal the emergence and development of pragmatic theory, the essence of the basic pragmatic concept of speech act and its various classifications. as well as the content structure of the concept of politeness, which is considered one of the universal concepts of all semantic theories.

The goals set in the dissertation unequivocally show that building a theoretical core is the most necessary condition for a full-fledged study of the empirical

material. And since this material reflects the multi-layered and multidimensional nature of politeness, the author finds it necessary to adhere to a holistic approach with communicative and interdisciplinary dimensions, combining the inductive and deductive methods of research. The work is undoubtedly pragmatic in nature, and, as is known, pragmatics is a strongly deductive science; therefore, it is natural that deduction prevails here and even prescribes selective solutions when choosing the language corpus – examples from fiction, theater plays, and television interviews. They contain usages from various communicative situations. It seems to me that a caveat is needed here: the genre regulation of the sources creates the opportunity to observe separate, but very significant fragments of the Spanish language, and above all, of its literary version.

The selection made in this way saves the author from the need to work with constructed examples, permissible in purely grammatical but not in pragmatic studies. The paper proposes an analytical research model that encompasses the diverse functioning of different politeness expression strategies depending on the pragmatic context. The striving for coherence of the presentation is striking, which is achieved by introducing dichotomous structures such as formal and communicative characteristics of politeness strategies; external and internal modifiers of the strategies; explicit and implicit information in dialogue; politeness strategies – impoliteness strategies, main speech act – supporting speech act, communicative intention of the speaker – conveying information. And it is no coincidence that the study is based on the concept of J. Leach, in which the dichotomous classification of speech acts based on the concepts of benefit and harm plays an important role. In the other fulcrum of the work – the politeness strategies of P. Brown and S. Levinson – there is also a dichotomous moment: minimizing social conflicts – maintaining the social image.

The presentation shows the good theoretical awareness of the dissertation candidate. Without dwelling on the individual authors whose concepts are analyzed in the dissertation, I will note some of the theoretical highlights with which I completely agree. One of them is the interest in the influence of the philosophy of language on the development of pragmatics. Another important

point in theoretical terms is the acceptance of Austin's idea that the perlocutionary goal in one speech act can be an unintended result in another. Theoretically, it is very important to understand the shift in attention in modern linguistics from language as a static and abstract product to its bearer, the speaker. This is evidenced by the focus on the communicative balance of the interests of the participants in communication, on making rational or irrational decisions when conducting a dialogue, etc. The author connects the expansion of the field of linguistic analysis with the dynamic structuralism of E. Koseriu, who introduced the concepts of ergon, dynamis and energeya. This is truly a new stage in modern linguistics, but it should still be acknowledged that Humboldt's dichotomy ergon – energeya is evident at the heart of this concept, and Koseriu moves on to the new type of research, oriented, according to Yu. Stepanov, to the so-called three-dimensional space of language.

The dissertation examines in great detail the terminological apparatuses of the individual directions in contemporary pragmatics and works in this direction very precisely and cleanly. I would like to make just one small recommendation: when talking about the well-developed concepts in pragmatic literature such as theme, rheme, topic and focus, he should note that the first two were proposed not by pragmatists, but by the Prague Circle in the theory of actual articulation, and the second two are truly a product of a later period, when pragmatic theory emerged as a relatively independent direction. I emphasize the word "relatively" because in any case, pragmatics remains within the framework of the broader and earlier formed anthropological direction. The terminological code is a request for belonging to a school, and terminological borrowings speak of a certain degree of proximity in scientific approaches.

When examining P. Grice's maxims, J. Koleva notes a point that, in my opinion, is particularly important – the result of their violation. Upon careful reading of Grice, one truly remains convinced that this aspect is as if more important for him himself, because the abuse of the communicative expectations of the interlocutor fundamentally changes the character of the speech act. Escandel Vidal's model is examined in great detail, in which pragmatic processes are subdivided into primary and secondary, and the interaction of cognitive representations of aspects of the

communicative situation outlines the social components of politeness. As the author notes, of particular interest for the present study is T. Van Dijk's concept of contextual models and contextual knowledge, and especially his thesis that the mental representations created by participants during communication represent a cognitive interface between the social context and discourse.

I have no objections to the analysis of the concept of speech act in contemporary pragmatic theory. The concepts of the individual authors are presented accurately and with an emphasis on the idea that the illocutionary force of an utterance depends not only on its linguistic realization, but also on the context. This idea of Escandel Vidal is indeed very convincing, because it would be a bit of a stretch to think that the utterance and the speech act in which it appears are inextricably linked.

The exposition of the different types of classifications of speech acts, their treatment through the prism of cross-cultural pragmatics, the clarification of the essence of conversational analysis, which assumes something like an axiomatic truth that the relationship of speech acts with dialogic units makes the second chapter of the dissertation extremely informative, interesting for specialists and useful for linguists beginning to study pragmatics. The concept of politeness seems at first glance to be well-known and indivisible. But the third chapter of the dissertation makes the reader think about it in more detail and agree with the author that this is a multifaceted concept, a form of behavior associated with a certain strategy, encompassing a series of maxims. Maxims, in turn, contain submaxims that are used by participants in speech acts to avoid conflicts and maintain harmonious relationships. Analyzing Leach's concept, Zheni Koleva identifies as a key moment in it the formulation of the relevant characteristics of politeness and, above all, the noting of the fact that it is not mandatory. This non-obligatory nature is manifested in the neutral assertives in relation to it, in the supporting commissions, in the directives flowing from it, and in the insults, curses, etc. that conflict with it.

Speaking about the relevance of politeness, the author emphasizes that universal ideas for any society such as status, power, distance, social role, etc.

change in different cultures and this can lead to misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication. The reason for this is to be found in the various shared background knowledge, which does not allow politeness to be reduced only to the correct use of standard, ritualized and conventional expressions, but to adaptation to the specific cultural context and situation. This issue is discussed in detail in section 3.5 Cross-cultural aspects of politeness.

As the antithesis of politeness, impoliteness and its strategies are analyzed. The author is right when she claims that the insufficient study of impoliteness, considered as abnormal behavior, is a serious omission, because actually impolite behavior plays a very big role in communication. Impoliteness also has its maxims, because "politeness and impoliteness are two sides of the same coin; to understand one side, it is necessary to pay attention to the other" (p. 67).

The work also pays attention to speech acts with optional politeness strategies. The compliment as a supporting speech act or reaction in the dialogue; the apology and the expression of gratitude as the main or supporting speech act in the dialogue are analyzed in detail. As can be seen, here too the dichotomous principle in the analysis of the material is strictly and consistently observed. It is also highlighted in the dichotomy of speech acts for politeness (chapters four and five) - – speech acts of impoliteness (chapter six), with the first component also dichotomously divided by the indicator of obligatoryness – optionality of the strategies, and the second – on the one hand by the indicator of purposefulness – non-purposefulness, and on the other hand by the indicator of directness – indirectness. This robust research approach brings transparency to the observed object and creates a comfortable situation for comprehensively clarifying the conditions for success, the types of strategy modifiers, and the types of response on the part of the addressee. In fact, all this lies at the heart of the proposed analytical and integral research model, with the help of which politeness strategies are analyzed “from the point of view of their internal structure, external modifiers, within the dialogic unity and in the context of the entire dialogue” (p. 155). The second part of the sentence is a quote from the concluding part of the dissertation, which lists the contributions in it. To avoid repeating them, I will note that they correspond to the content of the dissertation text and sufficiently

convincingly show that the author is a young, but already well-educated and promising researcher. In this I see the great role of the competent scientific leadership under which this serious theoretical study was created. In my opinion, from a theoretical point of view, the most important is point 9 in the Conclusion, which emphasizes the role of the interpretative dimensions of linguistic functioning, of the interpretation of utterances depending on the pragmatic context, the connection of which with the internal potential of the speech act itself is very precisely emphasized in point 6.

Last but not least, I would like to note the good and precise language of the presentation, which makes the dissertation readable and accessible (without losing its scientific qualities) even for people who are first exposed to the problems of modern linguistic pragmatics.

The abstract accurately and correctly reflects the content of the dissertation.

Conclusion: Everything stated above gives me reason to confidently assert that Mrs. Zheny Filipova Koleva fully deserves to be awarded the educational and scientific degree Doctor in professional field 2.1. Philology.

Reviewer:

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