

PRAGMATIC PECULIARITIES OF ADJECTIVES IN THE FUNCTION OF THE PREDICATIVE

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The aim of the article is to study pragmatic peculiarities of the predicative adjectives within the structure Vcop+ Adj. The topicality of the study is stipulated by the general trend in modern linguistics to explore the functional aspect of language. The analyzed extracts taken from the works of contemporary authors helped to single out the speech acts characteristic of the structure under investigation: they belong to the speech acts of the psychological support, namely: consolation, cheering, apology, gratitude, reproach, complimenting. Such acts typologically make up the expressive class of speech acts and are aimed at changing the addressee's psychological state. Along with J. Searle's typology that characterizes the illocutionary aim of such acts as that of expressing certain feelings, some other classifications have been taken into account. For example, a) the possibility of their belonging to direct or indirect speech acts according to the explicit or implicit ways of expression; their simple or complex structure according to the type of the sentence; their primary (universal) or secondary character according to the type of communicative situation.

The position of the speech act in the discourse has been also taken into account. From this point of view we can speak about initial and reactive speech acts. Initial speech acts open communication, they are closely connected with the next part of the discourse and stimulate its continuation or development (e.g.: greeting, invitation, apology). Reactive speech acts function as the reaction of the addressee caused by the verbal actions of the addresser (gratitude).

Keywords: predicative adjective, speech act, expressive, addresser, addressee, apology, gratitude, compliment.

Introduction. It is a well-known fact that human communication is carried out by means of purposeful utterances, i.e. speech acts strictly corresponding to the principles and rules of behavior accepted in the society. Nowadays the emphasis is often put on the speech acts that inform about the psychological state of the speaker, enable them to express their feelings and thus influence the emotional state of the addressee. The aim of the article is to analyze the speech acts that are most frequently expressed by means of the structure Vcop+Adj, namely speech acts of apology, gratitude and complimenting. The research has been carried out on the basis of examples taken from the works of English and American authors of the 20th and 21st centuries. The above mentioned acts belong to the group of expressives according to Searle's classification [18]; "The expressive acts are those that reveal the speaker's attitude, such as congratulation, condoling, or expressing pleasure. They have a strongly interpersonal function. One may therefore expect to find more of them in the discourse of characters within fiction than in the narrational voice" [7]. The analysis reveals that in all the above mentioned

speech acts structure Vcop + Adj is a central or next to central when used to render a certain illocutionary force.

Methods. The main methods of investigating the data have been the following ones: the descriptive analysis according to which the definitions of the speech acts under study have been given, the comparative analysis that made possible to draw a boarder line between some very similar speech acts, e. g.: compliment and praise, and also the contextual as well as conversational analyses. The last two enabled to determine the functional and semantic peculiarities of the speech acts under consideration, their participants, their main illocutionary aims.

The previous research. After J. Austin [5] “launched his theory of speech acts” (cited in Levinson, [14, p. 227], a lot of other rival classifications followed (Grice [12], Searle [18], Allwood [4], Lyons [15] , Bach & Harnish [6]). The speech acts have been classified from different points: according to the type of illocutionary force and ways of achieving a certain illocutionary effect, according to the status of the speaker and the hearer. Scholars have also focused their attention on the study of separate speech acts. Yet, the attempt to analyze structures that can serve as central or next to central as means of expressing different speech acts, i. e. “the reverse direction” of study “ from the form to meaning” have not been paid due attention to.

Discussion. Apology. The very essence of the speech act of apology apart from the speakers negative attitude towards the action presupposes the desire to be forgiven and is often followed by the attempt to justify their behavior, to redress the situation. The speakers try to set themselves clear with those whom they offended. In terms of Brown & Levinson model of politeness it is connected with the notion of “positive face: the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others” [9, p. 62].

The speech act of apologizing is a redressive – typically post-event – act which refers back to some break of a social contract or some type of social infringement [8]. Goffman called it remedial work, since it is aimed at re-establishing social harmony for a virtual or an actual damage [11].

Apology is a kind of activity that along with the notion of forgiveness includes explanation, request, promise, obligation.

The most widely used apology device is the phrase “I’m sorry”, with various intensifiers making it more or less emphatic. The intensifiers include words **so**, **very**, **terribly**, **awfully**.

(1) Have you been on the stage long, Miss – I’m **so** sorry I’ve forgotten your name” [24, p. 137].

(2) You’re not to leave me now! I must talk to somebody. I thought we might go and have a snack together before the show”.

“I’m **terribly** sorry. Jimmie’s expecting me and you know what he is” [24, p. 40].

(3) “I’m **awfully** sorry, Julia; I must regain my self-respect” [24, p. 146].

The word “sorry” without the subject is used only for relatively unimportant things as it is shown in the next example. The hearer doesn’t know the rules accepted in the theatre and after receiving explanation he just says “sorry” as on the whole the situation is of minor importance.

(4) “I’m so sorry but we never allow strangers behind”.

“Oh, **sorry**” [24, p. 176].

The phrase “I’m sorry” is followed by **for + gerund, infinitive** or **I/we/they** introducing **a clause**. The sentences that follow the phrase “I’m sorry” correspondingly explain and thus justify malfunction of a speaker or bring forward promise or request.

(5) “**I’m sorry**”. Her dark face hadn’t asked for pity but I felt it. “I wish I had some clues for you here but you see how it is. I can’t explain it either.”

“At least we believe each other” [22, p. 202].

The above example shows that apology is followed by the explanation. The speaker also states that she failed to achieve the aim, yet the explanation of the reasons that prevented her actions from being successive helped the addressee to get the positive opinion of the speaker.

In most cases it is the explanation that follows the phrase “I’m sorry” which helps the addressee to transform the negative opinion about the speaker into the positive one.

(6) “It was getting so late, I was afraid you weren’t coming”.

“**I’m sorry**, some tiresome people came around after the play and I couldn’t get rid of them” [24, p. 87].

(7) “**Sorry** we are so late”, said Roger. “There was a filthy crowd and we had to wait on nearly every tee. We halved a match” [24, p. 96].

The phrase “I’m sorry” makes up the most numerous group within the verbal ways of expressing the speech acts of apology. As many linguists are of the same opinion, the phrase is defined as the unmarked and routinized. However the fact that phrases approaching the etiquette formulas are not emotionally intensive does not prove the scarcity of emotional unity in modern society. Emotional obligations would be too strong if the person sympathized with the communicative partners to the degree they are feeling the things themselves [17, p. 287].

The phrase can be used with different pronouns in the function of the subject and in the different types of sentences including the elliptical and full ones.

(8) ... it might be that **he would be sorry** If he did that she would forgive him everything [24, p. 108].

In the above example it is the third person pronoun “he” that is in the function of the subject.

The next example shows the elliptical use of the sentence with the adjective “sorry”.

(9) “(**I’m**) **Sorry** to steal in like this. Your gate out there’s locked” [20, p. 36].

Of special interest are cases of indirect apology with the illocution expressed by other illocutionary acts. The key to the understanding of the apology is given by the context.

We are dealing with indirect acts when we use one act instead of another and it is for the addressee to work out what is intended. It is up to the hearer’s experience to interpret the indirect acts appropriately.

The empirical material testifies to the following ways of indirect apology:

a) apology by means of explanation:

(10) “**I’m so lonely** and your friendship meant a great deal to me. I’m surrounded by hangers – on and parasites and I knew you were disinterested. I felt I could rely on you” [24, p. 113].

b) apology by means of promise:

(11) “... if **you are still angry with me**, we’ll call it a day” [24, p. 110].

c) apology by means of explaining and informing:

(12) “Are you going to act in the next play?”

“Oh, I don’t think so. I’m not very **keen** on acting any more” [24, p. 17].

In all the above mentioned examples predicative adjectives “lonely”, “angry”, “keen” (the last one is used in the example in the negative form) function as synonyms of the adjective “sorry”. Semantics of neither of them possesses the meaning of apology. It is the whole situation that indicates speakers’ being sorry for their behavior, their attempts to explain it and correspondingly their promise not to do the same thing again.

Another synonymous phrase with the predicative adjective is “**I’m afraid**”.

It is used when the person addressed does not yet know what has happened.

(13) “**I’m afraid** I can’t pay you the two hundred pounds I owe you right away” [24, p. 112].

Speech act of apology expressed by means of the phrase “I’m sorry” should be differentiated from that of sympathy expressed by means of the same phrase in cases when the speaker just shows understanding and care for other people’s troubles.

(14) “You couldn’t possibly have slept in that carriage” he said. “There’s a man there who’s a heavy breather. I’d almost rather he snored. If he snored one could wake him”.

“**I’m so sorry**” [24, p. 82].

In this example the addressee doesn’t apologize. She is not asking for being forgiven. After listening to the complaints of the speaker she just shows her understanding.

In the following conversation the adjective **sorry** is not used to express apology either:

(15) “Are you **sorry**?” I asked.

“I’m neither **pleased** nor **sorry**. I just couldn’t help myself” [25, p. 98].

The speaker asks whether the young woman regrets what she has done. Her negative answer bears no traces of apology.

The last two examples prove that the phrase “I’m sorry” and the predicative adjective as its component are of syncretic character and it is the context that helps to specify the meaning.

Thus it is possible to say that apart from being used in structurally different types of sentences (elliptical and non-elliptical), with different adjective complementation – followed by the infinitive or a clause, predicative adjectives are used both in direct and indirect speech acts of apology, the latter being characterized by not mentioning directly the exact malpractice action and not showing too much regret because of that.

Gratitude. While speaking about the speech act of gratitude it is worth mentioning that not all the linguists consider gratitude to be a speech act. It is often viewed as a formulaic expression of etiquette. The ritual character of the gratitude, characteristic of many languages, is connected with certain “ritualized” expressions. In English the most common phrases are “Thank you” with different variations or just “thanks”, “thanks a lot”. The most frequently used predicative adjectives have also been identified, including adjectives **grateful**, **kind**, **obliged**.

The fact that the verb “thank” as a performative one (according to J. Searle [18], Yu. Апресян [1] N. Formanovskaya [3]), is at the same time the most common means of expressing gratitude makes some linguists consider gratitude to be a performative speech act.

Yet, according to J. Searle and Vanderveken’s classification, gratitude belongs to the class of expressives with the illocutionary aim of expressing the psychological state of the person [19, p. 212]. In other words expressives render the emotional state of the speaker. People express gratitude when they want the addressees to know that they are grateful for what the

addressees have said or done. Eisenstein & Bodman [10] point out that expressing gratitude establishes feelings of warmth and solidarity among interlocutors. In Leech's classification [13] the illocutionary aim of thanking is defined as appreciation, creating a friendly and polite atmosphere.

In case gratitude is expressed by means of the structure Vcop+Adj, it should be also taken into account that the predicative adjectives are in most cases the qualitative ones containing the evaluative component. The fact of evaluation rendered by the predicative adjectives proves that gratitude should be regarded as an expressive speech act.

In light of Brown & Levinson's politeness theory [9, p. 61], a speech act of thanking is considered to be a face threatening act in which the speaker acknowledges a debt to the hearer. The positive character of the speech act is emphasized by Searle [18]. He describes expressing gratitude as an illocutionary act performed by a speaker based on a past act performed by the hearer that was beneficial.

The Speech act of gratitude is analyzed from the point of view of its sincerity or insincerity, taking into account the fact that gratitude is the emotional reaction arising from noticing and appreciating the benefits that one has received. Along with sincere or insincere gratitude linguists single out phatic gratitude that is part of social ritual, polite behavior and performs the function of harmonious communication between communicants [2].

Phatic gratitude is considered to be a thanking that is of automatic character and takes place in stereotyped situations that include gratitude for some favor, compliment, praise, approval, paying attention.

(16) "What a stunning room this is".

"I'm so **glad** you like it" [24, p. 13].

The sentence with the predicative adjective is the example of **gratitude for complimenting**.

(17) When they came to the coffee he asked her whether he might offer her a liqueur.

"That's very **kind** of you" [24, p. 79–80].

In this case it is **gratitude for doing some favor**.

(18) "I've been at this game for twenty-five years. [...] I think you're a genius".

"It's **sweet** of you to say so" [25, p. 24].

The above-mentioned example shows **gratitude for praise**.

All the examples illustrate the phatic gratitude. They are expressed in the course of common conversation and demonstrate the knowledge of the common rules of the corresponding conventional procedure. In most cases it is the phrase "Thank you" that serves the purpose of not breaking the rules of social behavior but as the above mentioned examples prove the phrase Vcop + Adj can be also used in such cases.

Sincere gratitude is a positive emotional feeling expressed by the addressee for the received favor. Sincere gratitude presupposes the evaluation of the degree of usefulness of the action performed. The following examples show that in such cases sincere gratitude is modified by different intensifiers indicating how beneficial the action/favor is in the opinion of the speaker.

(19) "Darling, I've been talking to Michael. I'm going to put up the money to start you in management". [...] "Oh, you mustn't. Michael shouldn't have asked you. I won't have it. You've been **far, far too kind** to us already" [24, p. 55].

The expression of gratitude is used with the words **far, far too** and preceded by the three sentences (one with the interjection) testifying to how beneficial the action has been to the addressee.

(20) “What nonsense! You know I got more money than I know what to do with”. [...] “It’s **awfully** kind of you. You don’t know what a relief it is. I don’t know how to thank you” [24, p. 92].

In this example it is the intensifier “**awfully**” followed by the detailed description of the state the addressee is in and thus explains how important for him was the favor done by the addresser.

(21) “That would be **terribly kind** of you. I’ve never been to a rehearsal in my life” [24, p. 17].

The same adjective “kind” is intensified by the adverb “**terribly**”. The reason for expressing gratitude is also expressed in the next sentence.

(22) Then Charles got up to go. He took a miniature out of his pocket and gave it to her. “It’s a portrait of Clairon. She was an eighteenth-century actress and she had many of your gifts.” [...] “**Oh Charles, how can you!** You are **sweet**” [24, p. 69].

The hearer expresses sincere gratitude for the precious present she has received. The use of the interjection followed by a vocative in an exclamatory sentence shows a high degree of evaluation.

(23) “I’m glad we’re not stationed here”, she went on. [...] “It’s almost a hopeless task for the missionaries here. I can never be **sufficiently thankful** to God that we’re at least spared that” [23, p. 29].

The example illustrates situation of expressing gratitude to the authorities for sending missionaries to the place they consider suitable for their activity. Thanking is intensified by the adverb “**sufficiently**”.

All the examples illustrate the sincere gratitude on the side of the speaker.

Insincere gratitude is often connected with ironic, sarcastic and even hostile attitude of the addressee concerning the favor received.

The following examples show that though explicitly we see the expression of gratitude, yet the speaker is not sincere. Thus in the sentence below apart from the reason for not being sincere it is the word “**cad**” that serves as the indicator of a rather hostile reaction on the side of the person for whom seemingly beneficial action was done.

(24) “I know you were **wonderfully tactful** about it. You almost persuaded me that I was doing you a service when you paid my debts. You made it easy for me to behave like a **cad**” [24, p. 145].

In case the gratitude is insincere, its form remains the same but the context reveals its true pragmatic meaning.

(25) “Now, really. Why don’t you come and work for us? [...] You’d be doing me a favor, really”. She turned around to face Mia squarely. “In fact I insist. You must have time for your art.” [...]

“Thank you,” she said. “That’s **so very generous** of you to offer. How could I refuse?” [26, p. 70].

From the context, namely, from what the hearer thinks about the proposal we see that

gratitude is not sincere: “Mia could see there was no point in protesting, that protesting, in fact, would only make things worse and lead to ill will” [26, p. 70].

In case of the speech act of gratitude we may also speak about direct and **indirect** gratitude. The gratitude can be expressed indirectly when the utterance has the different illocutionary aim. Thus, if taken out of the context the sentence with the adjective **magnanimous** can be classified as a directive, namely as a request. But the preceding sentences show that it is the case of sincere gratitude intensified by the use of interjection to emphasize the state of the hearer.

(26) “I don’t care a hang about that. The only thing that matters is your health”.

“Oh, Christ, don’t be **so magnanimous**”, she cried. “I can’t bear it” [24, p. 154].

The provided analysis proves that the speech act of gratitude can be expressed by a number of variously intensified adjectives in the function of the predicative, in the communicatively different types of sentences (declarative and imperative), render phatic, sincere and insincere gratitude as well as indicate direct and indirect acts of gratitude.

Complimenting. There are different definitions of the speech act of compliment according to different viewpoints. According to Searle & Vanderveken compliments are used to express approval of the hearer for something. As speech acts they presuppose that the thing the hearer is complemented for is good, though it need not necessarily be good for him [19].

Compliments are expressions of positive evaluation that commonly occur in everyday conversational encounters among interlocutors of equal or higher status. A compliment may be used to open a conversation or to smooth conversational interaction by reinforcing the links of solidarity between the interlocutors. People usually compliment on personal qualities, abilities, possessions, clothes and appearance, achievements. According to Brown and Levinson’s theory compliments manifest positive politeness strategy, since they signal the complimenter’s noticing of and attending to the complimentee’s interest and needs [9, p. 78–80].

Like in case with the gratitude, speech act linguists distinguish between the phatic and sincere complementing. In case of phatic complementing the use of compliment approaches a ritualized speech utterance and is used in stereotyped situation.

But when compliment is expressed by means of the adjective it is hardly possible to speak about phatic complimenting. All the qualitative adjectives render a certain degree of evaluation, so we can speak about how expressive, how emotional are the compliments and whether they are sincere or insincere.

The emotions the speaker feels while complimenting another person are expressed by means of various intensifiers.

(27) “Why are you looking **so lovely** tonight?” [24, p. 165].

(28) “You look nice today”. [...] “I mean **extra nice**” [26, p. 50–51].

(29) “Oh, how **charmingly** you get angry,” he said. “I wish I had that faculty” [21, p. 27].

In case of complimenting of great importance is also the status of the speaker and the hearer, whether it is equal or not. If the addresser and the addressee are of the same status, the answer of the hearer is positive, polite with some implicit attempt to smooth exaggeration.

(30) “Hulloa, Julia, what’s the matter with you tonight? Gosh, you **look swell**, [...] “Why, you don’t look a day more than twenty-five”.

“With a son of fifteen it’s no good pretending I’m **so terribly young any more**. I’m forty and I don’t care who knows it” [24, p. 77].

Because the person who is paying the compliment is the partner of the actress, the leading man in the play, where they are acting together, the answer of the hearer is on the whole benevolent.

Yet the reaction is quite different when the compliment comes from the person whose status is lower, namely from the masseuse of the actress, as is shown in the example below. The answer is ironic, condescending and on the whole indicates that that kind of complementing is of a little value for the addressee.

(31) “When you came in just now, like a whirlwind”, she (the masseuse) said, “ I thought you looked twenty years **younger** your eyes were shining something **wonderful**”.

“Oh, keep that for Mr. Gosselyn, Miss Philips”. [...] “I feel like a two –year-old” [24, p. 77].

We may speak about indirect speech act of complimenting in case it is a part or is combined with another speech act (promise, reproach, etc.).

(32) “< ...> You know how fond Julia is of you, you **mustn’t be jealous**, you know, if she has other friends” [24, p. 120].

In the example above the husband of the actress is implicitly complimenting her acquaintance by asking her not to be jealous of his wife’s having other friends.

Another issue open to discussion is whether it is possible to draw a border line between complimenting and praise. This is not the main subject of the study, yet it is worth mentioning that linguists offer different criteria for the differentiation of these speech acts including the status of the communicants, degree of the exaggeration, gender peculiarities.

Yet, in the researcher’s point of view of great importance is the fact that complimenting is an interactive speech act whereas praising is a statement.

Differentiation of the illocutionary aims of approval, praise, compliment and flattery can be the subject of further investigations.

Conclusions. All the speech acts under consideration including the use of predicative adjectives are the expressive speech acts aimed at changing the addressee’s psychological state. In terms of politeness theory the speech acts of apology and complimenting are face saving acts, while the gratitude speech act is the face threatening act. Speech acts of apology and complimenting belong to the initiative speech acts, while the gratitude speech act is the reactive one. In all the speech acts predicative adjectives are modified by various intensifiers, they occur in different syntactic structures and can render, correspondingly, direct or indirect speech acts of apology, gratitude and compliment. Because predicative adjectives in the speech acts of apology, gratitude and complimenting can occur in different communicative situations (promise, reproach) and are not limited to some special spheres of communication (like preaching sermon or rendering a sentence) they may be classified as belonging to primary or universal and not secondary or institutional speech acts. The fact that along with the verbs and nouns predicative adjectives in the structure Vcop+ Adj are one of the most frequently used means of expressing the speech acts of apology, gratitude and complimenting testify to the importance of their role in the interactive speech communication. Though there are linguists who single out a number of some most frequently used adjectives in the function

of the predicative in the speech acts under study, yet, the empirical material proves that potentially any qualitative adjective with evaluative connotations can be used in this function.

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ПРАГМАТИЧНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ПРИКМЕТНИКІВ У ФУНКЦІЇ ПРЕДИКАТИВА

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Проаналізовано прагматичні особливості предикативних прикметників у рамках структури Vсор+ Adj. Розглянуті приклади засвідчують належність структури, у складі якої є предикативні прикметники, до класу експресивів – мовленнєвих актів, що виражають розуміння, співчуття, вибачення, вдячність і спрямовані на зміну психологічного стану адресата.

Ключові слова: предикативний прикметник, мовленнєвий акт, експресив, адресант, адресат, вибачення, вдячність.