

Pragmatic variables in content-oriented texts

One of the main concerns in pragmatics is related to how the listeners can make inferences about what is said in order to arrive at an interpretation of the speaker's intended meaning. In other words, pragmatics is the study of how more gets communicated than is said. Such perspective raises two questions: a) what determines the choice between the said and the unsaid; b) how to distinguish between context-sensitive and context-insensitive pragmatic markers.

Those questions constitute particular interest in translating content-oriented texts [1: 144]. Because such texts are related to entailment and implicature as forms of human cognition, pragmatic analysis, conducted as means of evaluation of translation, should uppermost consider these two parameters.

Generally speaking, entailment is not a pragmatic concept, which deals with speaker meaning, but is considered a purely logical concept, symbolized by $\|$ - [2: 33]. Some examples of entailment for the sentence (1) are presented in (2).

(1) *Understanding the causes of the financial crisis is critical for restoring stability and, to avoid another crisis of this magnitude, building a sound global financial system.*

(2) A. *Doing something is important to restore stability and to avoid crisis of this magnitude.*

B. *Understanding something and building something are important to restore stability and to avoid crisis of this magnitude.*

C. *Understanding the causes of the financial crisis and building a sound global financial system are important for something.*

D. *Something is important.*

In representing the relationship between (1) and (2B) by $I\|$ - 2B, we represent logical consequence. In uttering the sentence (1) the speaker is necessarily committed to a number of background entailments (only some of which are represented in (2 A-D)). This means that the author has to indicate, generally by the means of stress or word order, which entailment is more important for interpreting the intended meaning. In translation the relationship needs to be necessarily preserved and reproduced by the means of the target language (generally, word order for translation from English of French into Ukrainian and vice versa).

The same sentence (1) represents a series of presuppositions in (3) that can be made:

(3) A. *The financial crisis took place/ is taking place.*

B. *Something triggered the crisis.*

C. *Crisis is not good.*

D. *People want to fight the crisis.*

If we say that a sentence in (1) has a presupposition in (3 A – D), we can represent it as $(1) \gg (3 A-D)$.

If we negate any part of the sentence in A, all sentences in (3) stay the same, but the sentences in (2) will change:

(1) *Understanding the causes of the financial crisis is NOT critical for restoring stability.*

(2) A. *Doing something is NOT important for restoring stability.*

B. *Understanding something is NOT important for restoring stability.*

C. *Understanding the causes of the financial crisis is NOT important for something.*

D. *Something is NOT important.*

(3) A. *The financial crisis took place/ is taking place.*

B. *Something triggered the crisis.*

C. *Crisis is not good.*

D. *People want to fight the crisis.*

Again, if we represent those relationships under the logical schemes, they look as following:

NOT (1) $\|$ - NOT (2)

NOT (1) \gg (3)

The property of presupposition NOT (1) \gg (3) is described as constancy under negation [2: 26], whereas the property of entailment NOT (1) $\|$ - NOT (2) represents logical interdependency. These need to be taken into account in such informative utterances, as the change of one part leads to the change in meaning of the whole sentence. In the process of translation the notion of implicature is critical, because the translator may make the translation superfluous by adding the implied information.

Again, if we compare (1) and (3C) from a purely logical perspective, we may find that (3C) would have no communicative meaning, because the notion of “bad” is semantically enclosed in the word “crisis”, whereas (1) represents a logical cause-effect relation. By uttering (1), the author already evaluates crisis and it proposes the means to fight it. By uttering (3C), the author gives the listener (reader) a possibility to evaluate the crisis themselves. Depending on the context (e.g. the speaker in (1) thinks all crises are the same, or that all crises need same means to fight with; the speaker in (3C) implies that a crisis might also be good, or that crisis is a normal state of affairs), additional implicatures may be inferred. Implicatures are primarily examples of when more is being

communicated than is said. Grice [3: 186] has established the maxims, which are basically unstated assumptions in the conversations, according to which this principle works.

One of the maxims, that of quality, may be measured by a number of expressions we use to indicate that what we are saying may not be totally accurate. Their main function is to that of caution, or hedging, which shows that speaker is aware of this fact and hedges the responsibility for the said. Conventional expressions for maxims of quality for content oriented texts in English include “as is known”, “according to”, “we believe that” etc. They also communicate the speaker’s intention to give the listener a possibility to judge the utterance themselves. In the process of translation, especially when working with legal texts, the specialists has to consider all those hedges as those with extra pragmatic meaning.

Knowing that the sentence (1) is taken from the IMF 2009 Annual report, we will judge an utterance (1) hedged by one of the above mentioned as insufficient for decision-making.

It is known that understanding the causes of the financial crisis is critical for restoring stability and, to avoid another crisis of this magnitude, building a sound global financial system.

In this way, such expressions bring new pragmatic meaning to the utterance – that of a possibility for the listener to judge the utterance by themselves.

In conclusion, it is important to state once again that content oriented texts are mainly aimed at entailment and implicature as human cognition processes. Hence, pragmatic variables of these types should be accounted for in translating the texts of such types in order to preserve the meaning implied by the author.

Literature

- 1.** Reiss K. Texttyp und Übersetzungsmethode. Der operative Text. – Kronberg: Scriptor, 1986. – 228 s.
- 2.** Yule G. Pragmatics. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. – 152 p.
- 3.** Grice H.P. Presupposition and Conversational Implicature, in P. Cole (ed.), Radical Pragmatics, Academic Press, New York, – P. 183–198