

FUNCTIONAL STYLES AND SYNTACTIC IMPLICATION IN ENGLISH

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Abstract: The resulting sum of meanings (sense) of an utterance is much wider than a simple sum of meanings of its constituents, i.e. not all semantically relevant information is presented explicitly in the syntactic structure of an utterance. Implicit presentation of semantico-syntactic information is performed by syntactic compression. Means of syntactic compression used and types of semantico-syntactic information implied are dependent on the functional characteristics of the text. Scientific texts are object-centred - it is subject, agent, that is implied in 80% of usages. Fiction is subject-centred and less implicit in this respect.

Keywords: implication, compression, information, syntax, agent, subject, object, pragmatic, functional style, text.

As it is known every utterance, every text represents in its form (wording) only a fragment of the information that is meant for the addressee to understand. As a result each utterance presupposes vast spheres that are left without formal word representation, i.e. are implied. The fact is acknowledged by modern theories of verbal communication - implicatures in Co-operation Principle of H.P Grice (1975) or/and Sufficiency Principle of D.G.Bogushevich (1985).

On the one hand this feature of verbal communication produces a number of difficulties in understanding texts in foreign languages because of differences in semantic expectations established as a norm in different cultures. Besides there are differences within each community that concern the scope of implied information in various spheres of communication (science, technology, creative writing, etc.). This provides additional difficulties for non-native speakers, that should be overcome by special training. On the other hand it makes verbal communication more concentrated, more ample from the point of view of information exchanged. It is evident that the sum of meanings (sense) of each text cannot

be reduced to the mechanical composition of the meanings of its elements, the former is much wider and more informative than a simple sum of meanings of its constituent parts. In other words, not all semantically relevant information is presented explicitly in the surface syntactic structure of an utterance which results in generation of implicatures.

There are different varieties of implicatures in speech; and Language gives different means for introducing them in a communication process. The variety can be sorted out into two groups.

One group of implicatures can be deduced from the semantic links arising on the basis of the particular sphere of communication. Such semantic phenomena as presupposition, assumption, underlying idea and the like which influence the text as a whole and presume understanding as a result of direct or indirect, voluntary or non-voluntary comparison of that very text with other texts of the kind and with conventional norms of communication in the particular sphere of communication are very active in using associations evoked by the text as a unity.

The second group is more closely related to the structure and the form of the text and presents part of the information characterising the structure of the text subject matter. Applying here the types of textual information worked out by I.R.Galperin (1981) it can be referred to as implicit presentation of factual information. According to the laws (syntactic and semantic) of the language part of the language elements that are expected to be presented explicitly in implied.

There should exist formal components of the text which "carry" implicit information. These can easily be observed within syntactic structures which posses the capability of predicting other elements of the structure. So it is the syntactic level where elements can be regarded as "expected". Besides, it is the syntactic level where the elements do not simply present the information but express it pointing at what the general meaning of an utterance is, what its elements (and the elements of the referent situation) are, what the functions, the roles of these elements are in respect to one another and so on. What is meant here is well demonstrated by the valency and it naturally is revealed through the verb which predicts the number and cases of the elements of its frame. Another important characteristic of such a structure should be the availability of a certain sign, signal for the position which is expected but not necessarily is filled. Still another intrinsic feature should be the possibility to delete a component of the predicate frame preserving the possibility to restore it, should the necessity arise. Structures demonstrating these characteristics and opening the possibility to delete some elements of the structure are referred to as condensed, or compressed. Language phenomenon known as "compression" is estimated by the majority of linguists as a dominating tendency characteristic of modern English, though it is mainly associated with the principle of economy functioning in the language. In this paper an attempt is made to treat compression (compressed structures) as a means of implication and to show the relation of the two to functional and stylistic characteristics of the text and pragmatic intentions of the addresser.

Syntactic compression can be defined as "structurally-semantic curtailing", text structure reduction and information structure modification included. The procedure resulting in the formation of compressed structures can be described as the transformation of the predicate (up to its complete deletion) and the co-related transformation of its frame (up to the complete deletion of the elements of the frame). Semantico-syntactic characteristics of an expected but deleted element, further-on termed "implicit information", are specified as the implication of the subject and the object zones (parts) of the predicate frame.

Through the analysis of English short stories and scientific articles different language phenomena functioning as means of compression were revealed. Here belong different types of nominalization - nouns and adjectives derived from verbs either by means of conversion or by suffixation; non-finite verb-forms, either self-contained or within a predicative complex, - where a predicate frame is curtailed to a word or a nominal phrase; substitution - when different substitute-words are used to represent sentences (predicative structures) or text units larger than a sentence; different types of appositions, parenthesis; passive voice and some cases of ellipses.

Compression, as testified by the analysis, is characteristic of both scientific literature and creative writing (fiction). Though particular means of compression differ in their preferable use and frequency of occurrence in texts of the two styles, deverbal nouns, the Present Participle and the Past Participle are rather distinguishing in this respect. Deverbal nouns range number 1 in scientific texts while the Present Participle is most active in literary style; opposing the latter is the Past Participle which is three times more frequent in scientific articles. Still occurrence is not the main factor for this analysis as the characteristic feature of these language units is not the obligatory deletion but the possible deletion of some element. A more significant indicator should be the degree (extent) to which the potentialities of these units to delete an element were realised, it is termed here as saturation. Scientific texts are twice as saturated as fiction.

This co-relation is conditioned by extralinguistic and purely linguistic factors. The dependence of the addresser on the situation of communication is understood as the former. To preserve the referential content of the text intact the author has to present some part of the information implicitly which leads to the use of specific syntactic structures, i.e. means of syntactic compression, that reduce the form without loosing any of the content, provided explicit and implicit types of information are understood by the receiver of the information.

The choice of curtailed structures to present some pieces of information is related to the realisation of the communicative purpose of the text. The main line of the unrolling information is presented in the form of developed, grammatically complete subject-predicate structures. Supporting, additional information is presented in the form of curtailed (by means of compression) subject-predicate structures. This is not influenced by the extralinguistic factor of "importance" or "value" of information. It reflects a purely linguistic aspect of the preferable arrangement of the units of information in a text corresponding to the communicative purpose of the latter (Moskalskaya, 1981).

This leads to a conclusion that saturation of the text with means of compression containing deleted elements can be regarded as a characteristic, "style-forming" feature of the text and that it is dependent on the pragmatic intentions of the author.

Alongside with the above-mentioned, differences in the types of semantic information presented implicitly were observed as well as a certain correlation between a means of syntactic compression and a type of semantic information deleted. The latter can be well illustrated by participial phrases with the Present Participle that by reason of its grammatical nature cannot reduce the Agent, i.e. the subject in a curtailed subject-predicate structure, though actively deletes the Object. The opposite is true of participial phrases with the Past Participle.

Summing up the statistic data and the results of the analysis we come to a conclusion that means of syntactic compression and types of implicit information are related to functional characteristics of the texts. Scientific texts can be characterised as Object-centred - as the elements containing information on the object are presented explicitly in most cases while the subject (agent) is deleted in more than 80% of usages of curtailed structures. Creative writing, on the contrary, is Subject-centred and in general is less implicit from the point of view of syntactic implication - means of compression realise their potentialities for implicit presentations of information (delete the informative elements) twice less often.

Presented explicitly or implicitly, information is meant to be understood by the addressee. It means that there should exist certain elements of the sentence or parts of the text that can be regarded as spheres for revealing implicit information. These studied for the texts of the two functional styles demonstrate certain divergence, like all other aspects of the phenomenon. It seems obvious that there are two main sources for extracting information that could have been presented by the deleted elements: information within the text itself, termed here as "textual", and information related to the reader's background knowledge, termed here as "extra-textual". The former is further specified according to the immediate text elements containing information on the implied units: sentence, context (part of the text larger than a sentence immediately related to the compressed structure) and text proper. The latter is constituted by background knowledge, presupposition and the like. Of the two, textual information serves as a chief source for revealing implicit information in the texts of creative writing, while extra-textual information is a source for revealing of nearly 60% of implicit information in science literature. Thus it seems evident that syntactic implication can serve as a rather reliable source of functional styles characterisation with even deeper roots in communicative aims and pragmatic aspects of the latter.

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