A FRAGMENT OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNICATIVE STRUCTURES CALCULUS[1]

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Abstract: Three types of communicative characteristics have been distinguished: the communicative characteristics constituting speech acts (the focus that constitutes a statement, the interrogative component that constitutes a question, the imperative component of a demand, etc.), the non-constituting communicative characteristics that are opposed to the constituting ones and are optional (topic, non-interrogative component of a question, non-imperative component of a demand, etc.), and the communicative characteristics modifying speech act components that are also non-obligatory: contrast, verification, juxtaposition. Modifying characteristics are compatible with most of constituting and non-constituting components, e.g. there exist a contrastive focus, a contrastive topic, contrastive interrogative and non-interrogative components, and a contrastive imperative.

Keywords: communicative structure, topic, focus, interrogative, imperative, statement, juxtaposition, speech acts, contrast, verification.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the process of analyzing the communicative structure of a sentence there arises a notion of the communicative characteristics compatibility within the limits of a fragment of a sentence - NP, VP, Adv, S, or several phrases, e.g. two NPs. I refer to such characteristics as topic, focus, interrogative component of a question, contrast, verification (*yes-no*-meaning), etc.

This leads to the problem of "componential" analysis of communicative structures. It contains the inventory of the communicative features, the description of their reciprocal combinability, and the corresponding means of expression. Three principal types of communicative characteristics have been distinguished: the communicative characteristics constituting speech acts (the focus that constitutes the speech act of a statement, the interrogative component that constitutes a question, the imperative component of a demand, etc.), the non-constituting communicative characteristics that are opposed to the constituting ones and are optional (topic, non-interrogative component of a question, non-imperative component of a demand, etc.), and the communicative characteristics modifying speech act components that are also non-obligatory, such as contrast, verification, juxtaposition, **etc.** It becomes clear that there exist in Russian (and not only in Russian) a contrastive focus, a contrastive topic, contrastive interrogative and non-interrogative components, and a contrastive imperative. Similarly, the *yes-no*-meaning (*Mary did come*) is also compatible with most of communicatively relevant components of speech acts. The componential analysis allows to discover not only paradigmatic universals, but some syntagmatic principles as well; thus, it becomes obvious that contrastive components of a reply depend on contrasts in the corresponding question.

2. COMMUNICATIVE CHARACTERISTICS CONSTITUTING A SPEECH ACT TYPE

Communicative meanings convey the relations between the speaker, the hearer, and the world. The main type of these defines the speaker's intention to state a fact or a question, to demand, to express strong feelings, to call somebody.

2.1 Basic speech acts types

I recognize five types of sentences that form the framework of the Russian speech acts - they are basic since most sentences belong to one and only one of these types. These types are statements, questions, imperatives, exclamations, and allocutions. There exist also other illocutionary forces, but they do not have any grammatical expression: oaths, complaints, advices, threats, etc. They parasite on the regular speech acts and become oaths and threats due to the lexical expression or corresponding semantic intonation. Besides, there exist a lot of phraseologically bound speech acts like *God bless you* or *Go ahead*. They are much more manifold in Russian than in English because Russian is not so strictly regulated with regard to the syntactic structure of a sentence.

2.2. Topics and foci

I define a focus as a component of the communicative structure constituting a speech act of a statement. Reciprocally, a topic is its non-constituting component opposed to the focus. A statement is a statement because it contains a focus. A focus can be found only in statements because, say, in a question, there is nothing to state. A topic serves as a starting point for a speaker. There exist sentences without topics. So, the role of a focus is to form a statement as

a particular type of a speech act. If a sentence has a focus that means that a speaker intends to reflect in words some state of affairs for the hearer's sake.

2.3 Constituting and modifying communicative characteristics

The communicative structure in the narrow meaning defines the characteristics of a speech act. It is topic-focus bipartition, interrogative and non-interrogative components of a question, etc. The communicative structure in broader meaning includes communicative characteristics not constituting speech acts, but modifying them. Such meanings are contrast, *yes-no*-meaning, juxtaposition, and some others. Their scope is speech acts components - topics, foci, interrogative and non-interrogative, imperative and non-imperative components. Contrast and other meanings are defined for the communicatively characterized constituents and expressed syncretically along with them. For instance, a specific rising (more emphatic than usual) tone on the word *Sunday* marks a contrastive topic in the sentence *Our SUNDAY trip was postponed until the next week-end* (I give English examples when the difference between Russian and English is not crucial). The last sentence means that there were at least two trips, and it was the Sunday trip that was postponed while the other one remained on our social agenda.

The communicatively characterized constituent is a prosodically marked syntactic constituent - NP, VP, S, or sometimes - two or more constituents. An example of a syntactically complicated focus is:

Podster'og- ø - *monah-*ø *devk-u*
catch - past M monk- Nom girl - Acc
`When a trap was set, it was set by a monk to catch a girl (literally: *Caught - a monk a girl;*)'.

Here, *podster'og* (`caught') is a topic, and *monah devku* (a monk a girl) - a focus consisting of two NPs - *monah* and *devku* - that cannot been brought to one constituent .

2.4 Non-constituting communicative characteristics

The non-constituting communicative element of a speech act denotes something concerning what we speak, ask, or demand.

2.5 The communicative components of a question

The communicative constituent of a question is an interrogative component. In a special question

Gde Vadik- ø *poznakomi-l -* ø *- s'a s Marus-ey?*
Where Vadik-Nom. meet-Past-Masc.-Refl. with Mary- Instr.
`Where did Vadik get acquainted to Mary?'

gde (`where') is an interrogative component, and *Vadik poznakomils'a s Marusey* (`Vadik got acquainted to Mary') - is a non-interrogative one. A non-interrogative component is optional in Russian question:

Kotor-yy   chas-ø?
which- Nom. Masc.   hour- Nom.
`What time is it?' (literally `Which hour?')

2.6 Communicative components of an imperative

An imperative sentence comprises the constituting and can comprise non-constituting element. In the sentence *If you want it so much take it* the fragment *if you want it so much* is a non-imperative, and *take it* - an imperative component. Similarly, in the sentence *Before leaving, don't forget to take your breakfast from the fridge* the fragment *before leaving* is a non-imperative component.

3. MODIFYING COMMUNICATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

Contrast, *yes-no*-meaning, juxtaposition and some others also express the relations between the speaker, the hearer and the world, but they rather differentiate speech acts within the limits of one type than constitute them. They are articulated syncretically with components that constitute speech acts. That means that a certain expression - an intonation pattern and the choice of a word to be accentuated - concurrently marks a topic plus contrast, or interrogativity plus *yes-no*-meaning. The speech act, or illocutionary, meaning is always present in a sentence, while, say, the contrast is optional.

3.1 Contrast

Consider examples of the contrast: *MARY came, <not Sally>; It was Mary who came, <and not Sally>; She CAME, <not phoned>*. The semantics of a contrastive emphasis consists in the following: 1) there arises an idea of a set associated with an accentuated element and a choice made of this set; 2) all possibilities other than the emphasized one are rejected.

The contrast is compatible with all constituting and non-constituting elements of speech acts except allocutions and exclamations.

There can be contrastive foci (*He is a DOCTOR, <and not a policeman>*), contrastive topics (*If a DRUMMER lives in a room <the rest of the apartment is generally empty>*), contrastive interrogatives (*Who exactly? WHO? Which?*), contrastive non-interrogatives (*What did you give to the POLICEMAN?*). *Yes-no*-questions are contrastive questions: contrast and interrogativity are expressed syncretically: *Was it MARY? <Or Sally?>*.

The contrast can be expressed not only intonationally but also lexically. One of the words to express the contrast is *only* (Russian *tol'ko*). *Only* is often considered to be not a word of contrast but a word of focus (a focalizer, or rhematizer), cf. (K nig, 1991, and references cited therein; Haji ov< and Sgall, 1996) . It can be shown that *only* very often occurs within a topical component: *Only after Mao's death did Dan get an opportunity to fulfill his plans concerning China reformation.* Here, *only after Mao's death* is the topic, and the remainder - the focus of the analyzed sentence.This can also account for the phenomenon of the so called second occurrence focus (Partee, 1994) which, to my strong belief, is not a focus but a sentence final topic. An example of a second occurrence focus is a group *only gave xerox copies to the graduate students* in sentence B of the dialogue from (Partee, 1994):

A. Eva only gave xerox copies to the GRADUATE STUDENTS
B. No, PETR only gave xerox copies to the graduate students

The group *only gave xerox copies to the graduate students* in sentence B was considered to be a focus because it contained the word *only*. The example about Mao and Dan shows that the word *only* can be easily used within a topical component. So, I suppose that in the analyzed sentence B the sentence final group *only gave xerox copies to the graduate students* is not a focus but a topic, an unstressed one, as a sentence final topic usually is. Whereas, the constituent *PETR* is a contrastive focus.

I do not believe that there exist any unstressed foci. Dryer (1996) also claims that expressions with *only* and a phenomenon of a focus "must be kept distinct" and gives examples in which expressions with *only* and foci are different expressions. The main way to express an idea that a speaker wishes to state something for a hearer's sake is to use a special intonation pattern where a focal constituent carries a peculiar focal stress. So, a focus is embodied as a fragment of a sentence formed by a definite type of a phrasal stress. The boarder lines of this fragment are set by the choice of a word to be accentuated. Such a choice is in its turn subjected to definite rules. The rules take into consideration the syntactic structure of a constituent (or several constituents) and the text structure. The principal effect of the discursive context consists in the fact that all elements already mentioned (activated in the consciousness of the interlocutors) tend to abdicate from the role of a focus or an interrogative element and are included in the non-constituting component. Incorporating them into the structure of a focus demands special conditions. Such conditions are ellipsis, contrast, juxtaposition, citation, echo-questions, and some others.

Returning to the means of contrast expression, it should be mentioned that the English *wh-*word *which* and the Russian *kotoryy* (`which') denoting a choice from a restricted set of possibilities mark the contrast on an interrogative word. The contrast having lexical expression by the words of contrast - *only, even, which* - is not always connected with prosodic emphasis, and in some peculiar cases it can even be unstressed.

An interesting peculiarity of a contrastive imperative in Russian is using the generally omitted pronoun *ty* (`you'), cf.:

S p - i;   *Ty   SPI*
sleep - imperative   you sleep
`Sleep';            `I insist on your sleeping'

We say *spi* 'sleep' when we want somebody to sleep, and say *ty spi* `you sleep' or with reduplication *ty spi-spi* `you sleep-sleep' if somebody does not want to sleep and is going to do something else.

Concerning the syntagmatic aspect of the contrast, it must be noticed that if a *wh*-question includes the contrast in the non-interrogative component the topic of the corresponding question is contrastive: *What happened to the POLICEMAN? - The POLICEMAN got a flower.* The last sentence presupposes that somebody else got something else.

4. CONCLUSION

To summarize, I will say that the list of the communicative meanings is still open. There are some more communicative characteristics which I did not mention. The main point of my paper is that there exist three types of communicative characteristics - characteristics constituting speech acts, non-constituting characteristics opposed to the constituting ones, and modifying communicative characteristics. The characteristics of the first two types can be combined with one of the characteristics of the third type within the limits of one and the same syntactic constituent, or several constituents. The description of such combinability and its means of expression gives us a kind of communicative structures calculus of a certain language.

I have also tried to interpret the notion of focus as a constituting element of a speech act of a statement, i.e. as a component that makes a statement a statement, and therefore, to reconsider the following tendencies in the communicative structures analysis: a tendency to interpret a focus as non-activated (new) information (because these two phenomena can coincide only in their extensions, but not conceptually); a tendency to interpret the notion of focus as a result of a choice made from a set of alternatives (because such a choice is typical of the notion of contrast rather than that of focus); a tendency to postulate the notion of focus not only for a statement but also for some other speech acts, e.g., a question. I have also claimed the independence of the notion of contrast from other communicative meanings, particularly from focus.

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