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**PRAGMATIC POTENTIAL OF THE REPRESENTATION
OF METACOMMUNICATIVE COMPONENTS**

The paper considers the phenomenon of the metacommunication and deals with the theoretical conceptions of modern linguists concerning the problem of its definition. The research provides the results of the analysis based on German mass media material and shows some pragmatic features of the functioning of metacommunicative components in human communication.

Key words: metacommunication, metacommunicative component, pragmatic features, speaker, listener.

Modern science, particularly its branches such as psychology, sociology, psycholinguistics, political science and so on, pays more attention to problems of human communication. Simultaneously with this area linguistics represents the sphere of knowledge, which can help in solving these problems in the most constructive way, as analysis of speech has been its priority for a long time.

This article deals with the linguistic phenomenon of metacommunication, which plays an important role in the process of communication and which vividly reveals the personality of the speaker, his attitude to his own message, to interlocutor and some other aspects of the process of human communication.

Phenomenon of metacommunication and its components as units of functioning of this phenomenon in speech are of great interest for modern linguistics because from the middle of the XX century the sphere of research of metacommunication includes not only the subject of speech (the speaker), but also the addressee (the listener). Some scientists even speak about new “pragmatics of understanding”, which considers not only the attitude of the speaker to what and how he says, but also the attitude of the listener to the text in the process of its interpretation (Arutyunova, Stepanov etc). Recently the phenomenon of metacommunication has begun to be studied from the point of view of its effect on the result of communication (Aryukhina, Gurevich, Sinitsina etc), as in this aspect you can easily trace the attitude of the speaker to the interlocutor and the effect of the listener on the author’s speech.

It is known that the term “metacommunication” is used in different branches of science therefore it has different definitions. In linguistics it is also defined ambiguously (Devkin, Goykhman, Gurochkina etc). It is often used literally, in meaning of “message about message” or in other words “communication about communication”.

There are several approaches to investigation of metacommunication in modern linguistics. The first group of scientists consists of the founders of the term “metacommunication”. They divide communication into two levels: level of verbal communication, called communication proper, and the level of non-verbal instructions to the message, which is defined as “metacommunication” (Condon J., Giffin K., Mortensen C., Ruesch J. and so on). From the point of view of these scientists, the

main elements of functioning of metacommunication in the process of interaction are “non-verbal means of instructing the addressee about the intentions of the speaker, such as tempo of speech, means of sentence division, gestures, facial expressions, conventions of communication, characteristics of roles and statuses of the communicants and so on” [1].

The supporters of this approach particularly emphasize the metacommunicative function of non-verbal elements of communication, pointing out that “gestures are used in order to illustrate, underline, indicate, explain or interrupt, which means that they cannot be isolated from verbal communication” [2].

The development of this approach led to understanding of metacommunication as verbal messages, when they concern illocutionary or perlocutionary potential of the acts of speech of the speaker and the addressee [3]. In works of like-minded scientists the concept of “metacommunication” is viewed as broadly as possible, as any lingual units which illustrate communicative intentions of the communicants in the process of communication. For example, Dieter Wunderlich gives the following interpretation of the term “metacommunication”: «Metakommunikation ist ein sprachliches Verhalten, das über eine Kommunikation spricht, während es zugleich in dieser Kommunikation steht» [4]. Thereby, the peculiarity of meta-communication is the discussion of some aspects of communication in the process of interaction.

The next period in the development of investigation of metacommunication became the interpretation of this phenomenon as “communication about the code of communication”. The supporters of this approach believed that metacommunication lies beyond the borders of communication and does not form substantial content of the communication. Speaking of the process of information exchange in the process of speech, V. D. Devkin emphasizes that “along with different content, which forms the subject of the discussion, it may appear that communicants touch upon the “technique” of talking”. They may be concerned with the way of thoughts impression, the form of statement, the attitude of the interlocutor to the chosen form of speech, some external aspects of participating in communication” [5]. When in the process of speech we talk about mistakes in it, about physical aspects of speech, speech habits of the speaker, that is about how the talk is going and whether it enables understanding, in this very case according to Devkin “we deal with so-called metacommunication” [5].

Such interpretation of metacommunication is often used in education programs, and the supporters of this view are both renowned linguists (e.g. Devkin V. D.) and methodologists (Levandovsky T., Chaptikova A. A. etc). From the point of view of the language teaching methods there are, for example, some researches studying tutorial wording tasks and author’s comments concerning the language structure and the communicative situation [6]. Such works have an aim to expose the way of showing the metatext’s units on the verbal level in the text of a tutorial.

Another approach to phenomenon of metacommunication is based on understanding the act of communicative interaction as dichotomy of the aspect of meaning and the aspect of relationship of communicants. The supporters of the view believe that the aspect of meaning represents the communication proper – constant exchange of messages and the aspect of relationship of communicants should be understood as metacommunication [6].

The basis of this approach became the theory put forward by Paul Watzlawick, who formulated five major rules or, as the author himself called them, axioms, which explain the essence of human communication and vividly show the paradoxicality of it. The axiom № 2 says: “Every communication has the aspect of meaning and the aspect of relationship between the communicants” (“Jede Kommunikation hat einen Inhalts- und einen Beziehungsaspekt, wobei letzterer den ersten bestimmt”) [6]. The aspect of meaning in this case is understood as denotative meaning of sentence or utterance which was later referred to term “communication”. And “the aspect of relationship” – to the term of “metacommunication”.

Such ideas can be found in works of other scientists, however, the term “metacommunication” is not used in such context. “The major part of over-denotative meaning of the utterance will be determined by social and psychological characteristics of the personality of the speaker, the level of the education, the awareness of the topic discussed, the emotional state, social experience, the attitude to the interlocutor ... Altogether these factors influence the fact that the utterance acquire personal meaning which does not coincide with non-personal meaning. Besides, the personal meaning often has the traces of reflection of the speaker, elements of self-control, stimulated by the Addressee factor” [8]. All the factors named above can be traced in metacommunicative elements of the utterance. It is often these elements which help the speaker to verbalize the intention of the utterance and to make it clear for the addressee.

The point of view adopted by the authors working on the problem of metacommunication, the elements of investigation are crucial, so the elements of functioning of metacommunicative component in speech may differ. For example, there are metacommunicative non-verbal means (Pease A.), metacommunicative verbal means (Sinitsina A. N., Stribigev V. V.), metacommunicative acts of speech (Aryukhina E. G., Dubovchenko E. M.), a separate group of verbs was singled out called metacommunicative predicates (Gurevich L. S.).

The definition of the term “metacommunication” put forward by M.L. Makarov seems to be the most suitable on this stage of investigation and was assumed as a basis in this article: “Metacommunication is the part of communication, which is directed on itself, on communication in general and its different aspects: linguistic fabric of discourse, its strategical dynamics, the structure of exchanges and transactions – phases of interactions, change of communicative roles, introduction of subjects, interaction with context, regulation of interpersonal and social aspects of interaction, the norms of communication, processes of exchange and interpretation of information, the effectiveness of the channel of communication” [9].

This article deals with metacommunicative comments to speech, which represent verbal explanation to specific communicative act and describe, concretize or explain communicative process between interlocutors. The common thing between the interpretations of this term is the fact that meta-communicative component can determine the structure of the concrete situation in form of rules, directions and expectations. The important thing is that metacommunication can occur in oral and written speech, different types of discourse and it obligatory includes the establishment of the format of interaction between the speaker and the listener.

The most typical is integrated approach to analysis of pragmatic, emotional and modal aspects of the utterance, which contains metacommunicative components (expressed verbally) and which is from syntactical point of view either introductory or insert construction. This kind of utterance is the main object of this investigation. As a result of metacommunicative components research of utterance it is necessary to reveal the main functions, define types of components and its characteristic features, and also show specific nature of meta-communicative components use of utterance in different types of discourse.

As empirical material of the research extracts from original German journalistic texts were used, collected by the method of continuous sampling from modern printed media (e.g. Die Zeit, Die Welt, Hamburger Abendblatt, Rheinischer Merkur, Stuttgarter Zeitung, Frankfurter Rundschau, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Tagesspiegel, Berliner Zeitung etc.), and also materials of the German Internet were used (Spiegel Online, Die Welt Online, <http://www.focus.de>).

The analysis of the factual material, taken from modern German journalistic texts, shows that every language developed its own system of lingual expression of metacommunicative comments. It is most often represented by introductory and insert words and constructions, which are united in a group called “parenthesis”. According to the dictionary of foreign words, parenthesis is “linguistic combination of words or a sentence, introduced in another sentence often not connected to it grammatically, and intensifying or supplementing context, singles out by punctuation marks ”

[10]. This definition was assumed as a basis for singling out metacommunicative comments in this article. The analysis of the language material collected by the method of continuous sampling shows that in the German language these forms are insert construction: “mit anderen Worten ...”, “anders gesagt...”, „um es zusammenzufassen...“, „kurzum...“, “kurz gesagt...“, „offen gestanden...“. These language units as well as some other forms of verbalizing metacommunicative components in speech will be examined in the present article.

Metacommunicative elements can perform different functions in speech. All the researchers of the phenomenon of metacommunication underline its positive role in the process of communication. “The functional purpose of metacommunication is seen first of all in prophylactic maintenance of agreement between the interlocutors”, and metacommunication in its turn “is understood as the process of regulation, managing of dynamics of interaction via metacommunicative units, the main purpose of which is ensuring of successful speech interaction” [3]. Thereby, one of the main functions of metacommunication and metacommunicative elements is a regulative function.

However studying metacommunicative units from this point of view, researchers often limit the sphere of investigation with fixed language constructions and clichés, that are used for greeting, farewell, apologizing and so on. While most part of metacommunicative components functioning in the language is made up by free utterances, insert sentences or introductory constructions (created by the speaker without using fixed language constructions or clichés). This observation allows us to distinguish two groups of metacommunicative components: 1) metacommunicative component that is expressed by the fixed language construction, introductory or insert construction; 2) metacommunicative component that is not a fixed expression in the language, but it is a result of the speaker’s language creative work.

Concerning the first group of metacommunicative components factual material of the research of fixed insert constructions allows us to conclude that in terms of quantity most frequently such language forms as “kurz gesagt...”, „um es kurz zu machen...“, „um es zusammenzufassen...“, „kurzum...“ are used as metacommunicative components. The semantics of these constructions itself often predetermines the communicative and pragmatic functions they perform – summarizing the information, summing up the speech, short summary of what was said before. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

1. *Sie galten als Brutstätten des Aberglaubens, der Konterrevolution, fremder Interessen, **kurz gesagt**: des Feindes.*

2. *Um es kurz zu machen, das Objektiv ist total geil, ich bin richtig verliebt. Die ganze Haptik und Verarbeitung ist absolut Top, da merkt man schon einen Unterschied zu den üblichen Kit-Objektiven.*

However in the opposite case, it is much more frequent when the part of the utterance after the metacommunicative component is more voluminous than the explained original message.

3. *Nachhaltigkeit ist ein alter forstwissenschaftlicher Begriff, der, **kurz gesagt**, darauf hinausläuft, dass nicht mehr Holz aus dem Wald entfernt werden sollte als nachwächst, dass also der Einschlag, die Ernte sich nicht zuerst am menschlichen Bedarf, sondern an der Leistungsfähigkeit des natürlichen Systems orientieren sollte.*

Example № 3 is taken from an article written by expert in management in mass media professor P. Goltz and it vividly illustrates that metacommunicative element expressed by the introductory construction “kurz gesagt...” allows the speaker to make the effect of the utterance stringer, to reformulate the idea so that to prevent misunderstanding and, accordingly, to guarantee the successfulness of the utterance.

Such kind of functioning of the metacommunicative component, which is more detailed interpretation of one concept, can be observed in the examples № 4, № 5:

4. *Schmerz, Dunkelheit, Enge, Hunger und Ungewissheit - das ist, **kurz gesagt**, was der getretete Iraner namens Dschalil 13 Tage lang erlitten hat.*

5. *Das ist, **kurz gesagt**, die Lage der SPD eine Woche vor der Parteitagsentscheidung über den Eintritt in die große Koalition.*

The analysis of the empirical material suggests that the metacommunicative element expressed with the construction "kurz gesagt" is a quite popular construction in the German journalistic discourse where there are a lot of such [parentheses](#). They are used by the authors as a final component after an extensive description of the situation that allows to briefly summarize all mentioned above, pay the reader's attention to the main idea of the article and thus divide the main and final parts of the text.

However, the pragmatic function of these constructions is not limited by these purposes. Often metacommunicative component is used to contrast two parts of an utterance: before the element and after it, for example:

6. *Vielleicht am U-Bahnhof Schwanthaler Höhe oder im Laden von Therese Schifferl, wo es Äpfel und Birnen gibt, Bier, Cola, Leberkäs, luftdicht verschweißte Weißwürste, **kurz gesagt**: alles, was man zum Überleben in der Heimeranstraße braucht.*

Enumeration of the products mentioned in the first part of the sentence is hardly combined with the notion of survival (Überleben) following the metacommunicative form, and makes the whole text ironic and sarcastic.

Advertisements have become a special genre in modern journalism, their authors try to softly present the information and not to antagonize the reader. Therefore the marketing specialists need a fine linguistic feeling and a special talent to use any linguistic resources for promotional purposes correctly. Metacommunicative elements and stylistically colored vocabulary help the author to ensure the success of the text. It can be seen in the following passage:

7. *Also rollte am 28. Februar letzten Jahres ein Vectra C 2.2 16V in die Startposition zum 100.000-Kilometer-Langstreckenflug. Sein Ziel: alle Passagiere ohne Turbulenzen und Notlandungen ans Ziel bringen. **Um es kurz zu machen**: Noch nie absolvierte ein Opel den Test-Marathon derart bravourös und beschwerdefrei.*

The construction "offen gestanden ..." is used to emphasize the speaker's attitude to his own state.

8. ***Offen gestanden** frage ich mich dabei, wie man so dumm sein kann, überhaupt auf so einen Blödsinn zu reagieren.*

In this example using a metacommunicative form "offen gestanden ..." the author reflects on his own emotions and feelings that he experiences. Thus he emphasizes his openness and frankness with respect to the reader relying on his trust.

Besides along with a fixed language form the metacommunicative comment of the own speech act is used. It is formed by a speaker according to his ideas about that communicative action which he performs. The author asks himself and describes the act using language means without any fixed structures. Exactly this function of the metacommunicative components of the statement - a description of the communication process on the verbal level during this process – is the main one. Thus in the example 8 due to the second part of the metacommunicative comment - "... frage ich mich dabei ..." - we are dealing with so-called "metacommunicative predicate". This term was proposed by L. S. Gurevich. This type of predicate has a generalized meaning of "communication about communication" and introduces two situations of speaking simultaneously: 1) the communication itself (the current communicative situation), and 2) communication as an object of the current communication (the precedent related communicative situation). In other words, the sender of metacommunicative statements "referring to someone's speaking" and thus making the act of communication points out a certain communicative situation (communicative act) where this speech becomes the subject of an utterance [11].

Examples 8-11 represent the second group metacommunicative components realization in speech from the classification proposed in this paper (see above). Metacommunicative compo-

nents of a statement included in this group are expressed not only by stable forms of language but also by metacommunicative predicates simultaneously, i.e. all metacommunicative components (which are more than just a stable insert construction, such as "kurz gesagt ...", "um es kurz zu machen ...", etc.) are included into this group.

A special role in the process of functioning of metacommunicative components in speech is that "whose speaking" a sender talks about, whose statement he comments upon with this metacommunicative element: his own utterance, his companion's words or the statement of somebody else who is not present during the conversation. The analysis of the factual material suggests that metacommunicative means used in speech are different depending on that whose statements the author comments on.

Thus, the statement 8 is an excellent example of how the author comments upon his own speech. In this case he uses the neutral vocabulary in relation to the process of communication, i.e. the metacommunicative component is expressed by some plain words ("offen gestanden ...", "...frage ich mich dabei ..."). However, the text of the statement contains some evaluative words: dumm and Blödsinn. The sender can use them in relation to his own speech, to the speech of the person whose feelings he is interested in or to the person, a quarrel with whom is not a danger for him or his career, etc.

Consequently metacommunicative components have their own features in lexical aspect. Analyzing the factual material from the modern journalistic texts a lot of researchers emphasize the role of a recipient: "the modern conception of public relations includes along with other factors the factor of an addressee" [12]. The factual material used in the introduced research corroborates the need of taking into account some specific characteristics of a target audience of an edition. Evaluative vocabulary used by the author in the commentary on his own speech must not be used in relation to the interlocutor's speech if the conversation is wanted to be continued successfully. Right here some pragmatic settings of communicants are actively included into the process of communication. The speaker must follow some certain social requirements to communicate. He should not hurt or offend his interlocutor in any way, so he has to use such turns of speech or phrases that would not be unpleasant for his partner. If the speaker wants to express antipathy, irony or sarcasm in relation to the interlocutor or his words, he uses the turns of speech that express the idea implicitly.

In the analyzed material the neutral metacommunicative lexical means and predicates are mostly used. If the author does not aim to ridicule his opponent he avoids evaluative vocabulary, for example:

9. *Fragen nach Gegner und Chancen beantwortet der Wortkarge **kurz und bündig**: "Ich bin einfach besser".*

Direct speech is introduced by the metacommunicative remark which is represented by a neutral metacommunicative predicate "beantwortet" and stable insert construction "kurz und bündig". Here the verb "beantworten" is a metacommunicative predicate which describes the speech act performed in response to a previous remark and does not have any evaluative information in this case. The insert construction "kurz und bündig" is the author's commentary and describes the person's verbal action as concise and informative simultaneously. In addition, in this utterance there is a noun "der Wortkarge" which characterizes the person (whose words are commented already in this passage) as taciturn. The metacommunicative component in this statement is neutral enough and used to describe some features of communication.

10. *So sind es **kurz gesagt** wieder die Goorgoorlu - so heißen in der Landessprache Wolof diejenigen, die sich irgendwie durchschlagen - die Durchschnitts-Senegalesen, die das Ergebnis der Währungspolitik und der Abwertung des CFA-Francs ausbaden müssen.*

In this example the author describes the situation with the currency devaluation in Senegal in 1995. Here the metacommunicative elements are expressed in two ways. First, it is one of the fixed linguistic forms - «kurz gesagt», which is used by the author to summarize the above de-

scription in this sentence. Secondly, this is an insert sentence which realizes the function of elucidation and helps the reader who does not know the Aboriginal language, to understand the culture of the area described in the article. The statement in general has a negative connotation. The author empathizes with ordinary citizens of Senegal and uses all language means to arouse the readers' sympathy for them as they are also ordinary people who have nothing to do with authority and suffer when the government decides some political issues at the cost of the citizens' interests. The metacommunicative elements of the utterance help the author to achieve the desired perlocutive effect.

The results of a research of linguistic material suggest that the usage of the metacommunicative components in the journalistic discourse varies depending on the genre of a journalistic work. For example, works of the informational genre (news, report) provide the reader with unbiased facts; here the author often uses some metacommunicative structures and neutral vocabulary. In such works the author is not allowed to express his attitude to the event or give an assessment. Accordingly, in such kind of texts there are the metacommunicative components of the first group of the above classification (see examples 1, 4, 5, 9, 10).

In analytical and artistic-journalistic genres (articles, reviews, essays) the author is given an opportunity for creativity and self-expression. He has a right to express his own opinion, charge the event. In the texts of this type some metacommunicative components included into the second group of the proposed classification are widely used.

Consider a few examples:

11. *Für mich ist das Ziel des Kollegs erreicht, wenn ich danach mit Menschen spreche, die über ihren Tellerrand geblickt haben, ihre Arbeits- und Denkweise reflektiert haben und eine andere Wahrnehmung ihrer Nachbarstaaten, Deutschlands und der EU - **aber vielleicht auch ihres eigenen Heimatlandes** - besitzen.*

Extract is taken from the website of R. Bosh's fund «Carl Friedrich Goerdeler-Kolleg» (www.goerdeler-kolleg.de). In the article one of the authors of the project gives his opinion about the necessity and the purpose of its creation, therefore expresses his point of view. Here the metacommunicative component is used which is not fixed in the language and expressed in the words: «... aber vielleicht auch ihres eigenen Heimatlandes ...». It explains and clarifies the author's speech. The pragmatic role of the metacommunicative component in this example is great. These words make the whole utterance so tolerant. With their help the author emphasizes that the project is created not only for citizens of Germany and the EU, but that Robert Bosch's fund helps to acquire new political and educational knowledge for young leaders of such countries as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine.

12. *Der anonyme Brief einer anderen Geliebten, der den Streit ausgelöst haben soll, ist eindeutig von dem angeblichen Opfer selbst verfasst. **Kurzum: Die Tat, die angebliche, zumindest wie der Film "Der Kachelmann-Prozess" sie darstellt, versinkt mit jedem Monat des Prozesses mehr im Nebel.***

The given example is taken from the commentary on the new film from the German magazine «Focus». The metacommunicative components are expressed in two ways. The first one is that the turn of speech "kurzum ..." is used to summarize information. The second way - "zumindest wie der Film ... sie darstellt" - has an important function in the text and is a free commentary where there is no metacommunicative predicate itself. The first part of this metacommunicative commentary makes a reader doubt in the genuineness of the filmmakers' intentions. The turn of speech "zumindest wie" makes the reader think that the film distorts the information and therefore it can't be trusted.

The analysis of linguistic material shows that metacommunicative elements are quite widespread in the German press that seems quite logical because one of the main objectives of media is the impact on the reader (viewer or listener). The metacommunicative elements exposed in the

German journalistic texts perform a variety of pragmatic functions. The metacommunicative components of an utterance verbalize the speaker's communication strategy and speech techniques that he uses to strengthen the illocutive forces of the utterances. They do not only summarize the commentaries but also demonstrate the speaker's attitude to the content of his messages. The metacommunicative elements allow us to find out the author's communication strategies. And the author in his turn is helped to influence the recipient of the message, to achieve the desired perlocutive effect, to provide the listener or reader with a proper understanding of the speech. However, quite frequently the metacommunicative components are used as a preventive measure by the speaker to avoid listener's misunderstanding and to secure the success of his speech.

In this work with linguistic material special attention is paid to that whose speech is commented by the speaker. As a result it turns out that metacommunicative component used by the speaker to comment (to make additions, clarifications of the contents) his own speech, and the metacommunicative component used for commenting (explanations, characteristics) somebody else's speech when the speaker listens to somebody but doesn't take part in the conversation are quite different. They differ according to the terms of their linguistic content and the pragmatic functions they perform.

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