

CONTACT RESPONSIVE SENTENCES IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

A sentence in the English language is, as a rule, characterized with such significant parameters as its structural type and its type by the aim of communication. Syntactic units with the communicative task «verbal reaction to the question or statement within or out of the question-answer system» (responsive sentences) had not been distinguished yet in the English grammatical system as those, belonging to the special type of sentences by the purpose of communication. Nevertheless, there are linguistic researches focusing on the syntactic units of this type. The responsives have their typology. This classification can be complemented with one more subtype – contact responsive sentences. These syntactic units we identify as verbal reaction to the addressing, requests etc. The initial question or statement is, in the majority of cases, clichéd, standard and the response or reaction on it can be unexpected and it is difficult to predict it. The structure and functional loading of the contact responsive sentences depend on a wide range of linguistic and extralinguistic reasons, beginning with the economy of time by the speaker. Contact responsive sentences following the same initial statement may be represented by one word or short phrase as well as detail piece of information about something. The lexical and semantic aspect of the syntactic units under review, as a rule, depends on a wide range of linguistic and extralinguistic factors.

Contact responsive sentences as well as the responsive sentences of the other types are of great interest concerning their structural, semantic and lexical aspect.

Keywords: responsive sentence; contact responsive; latent responsive; verbal reaction; «question-answer» system; types of sentences according to the aim of communication; non-functional responsive.

A sentence in the English language is, as a rule, characterized with such significant parameters as its structural type and its type by the aim of communication. The majority of referential books on English grammar contain two the most widespread classifications of sentences according to the purpose of communication: 1) declarative, interrogative and imperative sentences; 2) declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamative sentences. Syntactic units with the communicative task «verbal reaction to the question or statement within or out of the question-answer system» had not been distinguished yet in the English grammatical system as those, belonging to the special type of sentences by the purpose of communication.

Nevertheless, there are linguistic researches focusing on the syntactic units of this type. First of all, the scientific paper «The Structure of English: An Introduction to the Construction of English Sentences» by Charles Fries should be mentioned, where the author in keeping with the Leonard Bloomfield's theory about the existing of stimulus and reaction to it describes the following types of sentences: «situation utterance» (eliciting a response) and «response-utterances». Situation utterances are subdivided into 3 groups: 1) utterances that are regularly followed by oral responses only. These are greetings, calls, questions. (Hello, goodbye, see you soon). 2) Utterances eliciting action responding. These are requests or commands (come up to me). 3) utterances regularly eliciting conventional signals of attention to continue discourse. (I've been talking to him. – Yes.) [6, p. 116–117]. So, responses are seen as a separate type of sentences according to the aim of communication. In the interpretation of

David G. Lockwood, Peter Howard Fries, James E. Copeland the term «responsive» means structures «They are, we are, I am, he/she is» etc [7, p.112–116]. Jones Bob Morris under the notion «responsive» describes «yes-no words and their equivalents» [9]. Responsive sentences as functionally significant and specific communicative units were described by I.I. Menshikov, who identified them as «verbal reaction to the question within the question-answer system». In the proposed article under the term «responsive sentence» is seen the verbal reaction to any kind of statement: interrogative as well as declarative and imperative.

The responsives have their typology. As follows from the scientific research of I. I. Menshikov, they firstly can be divided into two groups: functional and non-functional responsives [2: 98], while functional responsive sentences were considered as those, answering the question directly, giving the necessary information to the questioner and satisfying the person, who asks the question or mentions some facts (*Can you advise me some flights if it is nothing to Chicago? – There's nothing to Chicago, New York, Nashville; Are we going to take another train? – We are going to take a train, if it will not be possible to take a car; I think she sings funny – She sings funny and her dancing's not all that great either*) and non-functional ones vice versa: is used for avoiding answering the question or providing a conversation partner with the information he/she needs (*Will you answer my questions? – I have no time!; What's the matter with you? – Don't you start speaking with me now; What do you think, how long will we fly? – Stop talking!*). Non-functional responsive itself can be also divided into subtypes: sabotaged, manipulative,

expressing emotional reaction, rejection or correction of your own words, clichéd responsive etc.

This classification can be complemented with one more subtype – contact responsive sentences. These syntactic units we identify as verbal reaction to the addressing, requests etc. For example, *Excuse me... – Can I help you?; Wait! – Yes?; Please, listen to me! – Speak with someone else! I am in hurry!* etc. As we can see from the examples, the initial question or statement is, in the majority of cases, clichéd, standard and the response or reaction on it can be unexpected and it is difficult to predict it. The structure and functional loading of the contact responsive sentences depend on a wide range of linguistic and extralinguistic reasons, beginning with the economy of time by the speaker: *Hello! I say – Yes?; Excuse me... – What?* and ending with the attempt to get rid of the conversation partner as soon as possible: *Excuse me, where is Thompson Street situated? – I'm not your answering service; I say! – I have no time!* Very often the response is also dependent on the initial phrase itself: *I beg your pardon, can I address you? – Of course, I listen to you!; You, there! – What do you want?; Hey! – What?* Basically, the contact responsive sentence is the reaction to the phrase, saying in order to draw the attention to the person: *Excuse me, pardon me, I say, Hi!, Hey!* etc. The first two forms (*Excuse me* and *Pardon me*) are considered as polite ones and they are addressing and at the same time apologizing for the disturbing a person you are speaking to. In most cases the responsive sentence for these phrases will be the following: *Can I help you? I am listening to you!* etc. Responsive sentences to such type of initial phrases are used generally to see if the person you speak with wants to continue the conversation. Contact responsive sentences usually stop the conversation or are followed with the next question or statement, demanding the concrete answer/reaction: *I am sorry to trouble you, but can you speak with me for a minute? – It's ok, can I help you? – Could you please tell me how can I get to the bus station from here? – With pleasure. You should take the first left and go straight on. It's on the left.* Or one more example: *Excuse me. Do you know where the baggage claim area is? – Yeah, it's downstairs. Take an elevator at the far end of the hall there, and it'll be right behind you when you go downstairs. – Okay, let's see ... I take that elevator down there and turn around when I get to the first floor and I'll see it. – Right – Great! Thanks! – Any time!* Here the correlation between the addressing (initial phrase) and the responsive sentence are represented as «question-answer entity» – structural variant of dialogical correlation: the fragment of dialogue, consisting of two or more informationally-bound phrases.

Contact responsive sentences following the same initial statement may be represented by one word or short phrase: *Could you tell me, is the supermarket far from it? – No; Excuse me. Is there a bank near here? – Yes, there is a bank on the corner* as well as detail piece of information about something: *How can I get to the bank? – Cross the road and turn left at the other side. Walk along the footpath until you reach the traffic lights. You will see a shopping centre on the right hand side. Walk across the road and turn right after the shopping centre. Keep going straight for about 100m and the bank is to*

your left. Responsive sentences, including contact responsive, are characterized with lexical and grammatical (structural) diversity. As we can see from the above-mentioned examples, this syntactic unit can comprise some several words, sentence fragment, be an incomplete or complete sentence. Among the analyzed 3000 contact responsive phrases we distinguished 337 responsives consisting of one word, 561 – word-combinations or sentence fragment, 942 – complete sentences and 1160 – incomplete sentences.

Contact responsive sentence can be connected with the initial phrase explicitly as well as implicitly. It means, that in the «question/statement-verbal reaction» entity there is a complex semantic unit, and, even if the connection is unclear firstly, it can be found deeper. So, in the contact responsive sentences, for example, when the conversation partner did not satisfy the asking person (*I say! – I have no time!; Can you, please, help me? – Ask someone else!*), responsive is always connected with the initial statement, because despite the result of the communication, the responsive phrase is the answer/verbal reaction to the question or statement at the beginning of the conversation.

The lexical and semantic aspect of the syntactic units under review, as a rule, depends on a wide range of linguistic and extralinguistic factors. Among the linguistic ones are such as economy of the lexical material, the structure of the initial phrase itself, lexical material of the initial phrase, speech patterns, used by the conversation partners, the style of the communication, the clarity, concreteness, accuracy and correctness of the said phrase. Having analyzed 3000 dialogues comprising the contact responsive sentences, we made the following conclusion: the most widespread linguistic reason, influencing the result of the communication, is the lexical material and structure of the initial phrase (547 dialogues), the next factors are the style of the initial phrase and its correctness (334 dialogues), the economy of lexical material or, in other words, trying to answer briefly (158 dialogues). The other 1961 dialogues were influenced with the combination of the factors mentioned above.

The tendency to save linguistic resources is a characteristic feature of the almost every language. Linguistic economy – is the desire of the communication participant to save the speaker's efforts at using speech as one of the reasons to change the language. In the syntax of language means savings can be found in elliptical constructions in incomplete sentences in the deletion of the auxiliary words, etc. In some cases, the application of the principle of linguistic economy cannot affect the course of communication; for example, when the speaker knows the subject of conversation it is not difficult to recover the missing elements of the statement.

As a tendency to over-saving of the speech means, the desire for «redundancy» in the speech dialogue is also an important factor that determines the nature of the contact responsive sentence. So, while one conversation partner is giving too much unnecessary detail without any need for it, the other one is forced to clarify something, ask again, trying not to get lost in the details and to determine the basic meaning of the utterance.

One more linguistic factor that contributes to the character of contact responsive sentence in dialogic speech is the construction of the initial phrase itself, which requires the verbal reaction. Changing the grammatical construction of statements may cause misunderstanding of the meaning of the utterance, what the speaker wanted to say that the other partner of communication, since the original statement is somewhat ambiguous.

One of the most important linguistic factors determining the nature of contact responsive sentences in dialogic speech is the lexical content of the original statement, the reaction to which is certain responsive sentence. Lexical material which is used by speaker largely determines the course of communication and the nature of the response, which will follow this type of statement.

Accuracy, pace of speech, clarity of the pronunciation, correct interpretation of the lexical units of the original phrase are also significant linguistic factors determining the nature of responsive sentences.

Of course, linguistic reasons are defining the way of the communication only in combination with the extralinguistic factors. And, very often, extralinguistic factors are dominant. Among them we can note the following ones: 1) The emotional condition of the speakers: *Excuse me? – Get off my back!; Can you help me to find the way to the nearest bank? – Of course, I will be very glad to help you!* 2) The relations between speakers: *Hi! Can I speak with you? – Don't bother me; Sir, can you help me with the map? – Please, ask you questions;* 3) Having or not having an intention to answer the question: *Sorry, can you show me the way to the grocery? – I have no time!; Sorry, can you explain me where is the building with this address? – You should go straight and then turn left. The building you need will be the third one.* 4) A wish to give more information, then the speaker asks for: *Excuse me. Are some dress shops here? – A lot of! And, by the way, I can show you an excellent clothing repair studio here!; Excuse me, show me this laptop, please! – Here you are! And, please, look at this model!* 5) A personality of the individual you ask a question: *Sorry... – Shut*

up; Excuse me? – I am listening very attentively; 6) Having or not having information you ask for: *Sorry, any idea how to get to the station of the 23-rd bus? – No; Excuse me, how late's the restaurant open? – 8:30 every night;* 7) A situation itself: *– Sorry, what is this? – Don't touch it!* 8) An intention to bewilder the speaker, to avoid answering the question and, sometimes, a wish to get even some information from the speaker: *Can I address you, I saw you from the window. – What are you doing here?;* 9) Lack of time for conversation: *Sorry, where are the Thompson street? Ask someone else! I am in a hurry! – Can I talk to you for a minute? – Quickly,* etc.

Having analyzed 3000 dialogues comprising the contact responsive sentences, we concluded that: the most widespread extralinguistic reason, influencing the result of the communication, is the intention to answer the question (216 dialogues), the next factors are having or not having information you ask for (184 dialogues), lack of time for conversation (179 dialogues), a wish to give more information, then the speaker asks for (173 dialogues), a personality of the individual you ask a question (137 dialogues), the emotional condition of the speakers (126 dialogues), a situation itself (75 dialogues), an intention to bewilder the speaker, to avoid answering the question and, sometimes, a wish to get even some information from the speaker (47 dialogues), the relations between speakers (32 dialogues). This statistics is only approximate, because the majority of dialogues are influenced with the combination of the factors mentioned above, in our calculations we have chosen the dominant one according to our opinion.

Contact responsive sentences as well as the responsive sentences of the other types are of great interest concerning their structural, semantic and lexical aspect. The prospects of the further research of the functional peculiarities of the responsives are in the conducting of the comparative analysis of such types of sentences in different languages in order to understand the specific character of these syntactic units.

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КОНТАКТНИЙ РЕСПОНСИВ В АНГЛІЙСЬКІЙ МОВІ

Статтю присвячено дослідженню особливостей респонсивних речень, що представляють собою вербальну реакцію на будь-яке висловлювання, на матеріалі сучасної англійської мови. Особливу увагу приділено одному із підтипів респонсивів, а саме контактним респонсивним реченням, їхнім структурно-семантичним особливостям. Синтаксичні одиниці, що досліджуються, розглядаються як такі, що протипоставлені за своїм комунікативним завданням іншим типам речень за метою висловлювання. Контактні респонсивні речення є реакцією на звертання. Комунікативні одиниці цього типу характеризуються різноманітністю лексичного матеріалу, особливою структурною побудовою та семантикою. Контактні респонсиви можуть бути представлені як одним словом, так і розгорнутим висловлюванням; також вони можуть мати різне функціональне навантаження, а саме містити відповідь на питання співрозмовника чи потрібну йому/їй інформацію, вказувати на бажання уникнути розмови і т. д.

Ключові слова: респонсивне речення; контактний респонсив; латентний респонсив; вербальна реакція; система «питання-відповідь»; типи речень за метою висловлювання; нефункціональний респонсив.

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КОНТАКТНИЙ РЕСПОНСИВ В АНГЛІЙСЬКОМУ ЯЗЫКЕ

Статья посвящена исследованию особенностей респонсивных предложений, представляющих собой вербальную реакцию на любое высказывание, на материале английского языка. Особое внимание уделяется одному из подтипов респонсивов – контактному респонсивному предложению, их структурно-семантическим особенностям. Исследуемые синтаксические единицы рассматриваются как противопоставленные другим типам предложений по цели высказывания. Контактные респонсивные предложения – это реакция на обращение. Коммуникативные единицы такого типа характеризуются разнообразием лексического материала, особым структурным построением и семантикой. Контактные респонсивы могут быть представлены как одним словом, так и развернутым высказыванием; также они могут иметь разную функциональную нагрузку, а именно содержать в себе ответ на вопрос собеседника или нужную ему информацию, указывать на желание избежать разговора и т.п.

Ключевые слова: респонсивное предложение; контактный респонсив; латентный респонсив; вербальная реакция; система «вопрос-ответ»; типы предложений по цели высказывания; нефункциональный респонсив.