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Section:

TEXT AND DISCOURSE LINGUISTICS

THE LINGUAL AND PRAGMATIC CHARACTERISTICS OF OCCASIONALISMS IN THE AMERICAN MEDIA DISCOURSE

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Abstract. In the article, the notion of an occasionalism was studied; its place and role in the media discourse were outlined. While analyzing occasionalisms according to the theory of relevance by D. Sperber and D. Wilson, the inferential processes in the interpretation of utterances containing occasionalisms were traced. Thanks to conducted analysis, the meaning of occasional units was inferred, the pragmatic characteristics of these units were described and the effects, which they produce in media texts, were singled out.

Keywords: occasionalism, theory of relevance, media discourse.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of the vocabulary of any language is a dynamic process, since people seek to perceive reality by means of a semiotic system, deepen information and sense content of what is expressed and bring cultures of different nations together. Cognitive and perceptive activities of an individual, especially a creative person, are always focused on looking for and using the potential occasional expressive possibilities of linguistic signs [2, p. 41].

The penetration of new words into the vocabulary of a particular language is of great importance today, in an era of the intensification of communicative and cognitive processes in information and technology, socio-cultural and economic and political spheres. Media discourse is the source of information that immediately reacts to any changes and progress in all spheres of society and the life of an individual, and thus, this type of discourse contributes to the formation of new, especially occasional vocabulary.

The relevance of our research is determined by the linguists' growing interest in the expressive potential of the language and the lack of a comprehensive analysis of pragmatic functioning of occasionalisms in the American media discourse, because on the basis of this analysis one can trace the emergence of new concepts that require nomination. The need for a pragmatic analysis of the characteristics of occasionalisms in the media discourse is also conditioned by the ability of these units to influence the perception and processing of information due to their emotional and stylistic expressiveness and the capacity to produce certain effects in media texts.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Occasionalism – is an expressive speech unit, which names certain objects or phenomena in a new, fresh and original way, and contradicts the traditions and norms of lexical units' usage [5, p. 6]. Typically, this unit conveys its meaning only in a certain context and such features as non-reproduction, unusualness, expressiveness and constant novelty characterize it.

One creates occasionalisms in media texts not only to fill lexical gaps in a language or speech, but also to lay emphasis on the context in which they are used. To draw the reader's attention to certain topics, the authors of media texts need to pick up some units of a language, which are able to present information in such a way, that it will influence the processes of interpretation and analysis of what is read [3, p. 220].

In order to describe the nature of occasional elements more broadly in terms of linguistic pragmatics, we think it is reasonable to use the theory of relevance by D. Sperber and D. Wilson, according to which "the expectations of relevance raised by an utterance are quite precise and predictable to guide the listener towards the speaker's meaning". The purpose of the theory is to explain in cognitively realistic terms what these expectations of relevance amount to, and how they might contribute to an empirically plausible account of comprehension [4, p. 250].

To analyze inferential steps that occur while interpreting the utterances containing occasionalisms, we will adopt the approach offered by D. Sperber and D. Wilson for the analysis of metonymy, metaphor, hyperbole, irony and other stylistic means, in which theorists illustrate the process of interpreting the message. First, one decodes the utterance, then determines expectations of relevance, implicit premises – contextual assumptions, intended by the speaker and supplemented by the reader, and implicit conclusions – contextual implications, which the speaker tells [1, p. 195]. After that, the interpretation of an explicit meaning of the utterance and the general interpretation of the utterance (explicit meaning and implicatures) take place. As a rule, such interpretations satisfy the expectations of relevance of the reader.

The article "The rise of the "Good Divorce" highlights modern trends in marriages (Time, August 3, 2015) and to denote a new phenomenon of the family life of celebrities, the author uses an occasionalism *divorce-moon*: "In June, Jennifer Garner and Ben Affleck announced that their marriage was over – but not their friendship" and commitment to good "co-parenting". ...photographs surfaced of them vacationing in the Bahamas on a so-called "*divorce-moon*". The occasional unit, which was coined by means of blending according to the pattern *divorce+honeymoon*, produces in the text the effect of contradiction.

(Here is the process of inferring the meaning of the utterance).

(A) The author of the article wrote ... " <i>photographs surfaced of them vacationing in the Bahamas on a so-called "divorce-moon"</i> "	<i>Decoding the author's utterance</i>
(B) The author's utterance is optimally relevant to the reader	<i>Expectation raised by the recognition of the author's utterance as a communicative act.</i>
(C) The author's utterance will achieve relevance, because it concerns the reader's interests.	<i>Expectation raised by (B), together with the fact that the reader pays attention to this article and the notion, which denotes the new level or relationships pertaining to Hollywood couples</i>
(D) Jennifer Garner and Ben Affleck have divorced	<i>First assumption of the reader activated by the text of the article and the usage of words "their marriage was over".</i>

	Accepted as an implicit premise (1) of the author's utterance
(E) Despite their divorce, the couple still gets along quite well.	Second assumption of the reader activated by the lexical innovation "divorce-moon", usual words "friendship" "commitment" "good co-parenting" and the title of the article. Accepted as an implicit premise (2) of the author's utterance.
(F) Ben Affleck and Jennifer Garner have spent together DIVORCE-MOON* (where the meaning of DIVORCE-MOON* can be inferred through the comprehension of the concept-donor DIVORCE and concept-recipient HONEYMOON and it provides a basis for implicature (G))	Description of an enriched interpretation of the explicit meaning of the utterance, as decoded in (A), which together with (D) and (E) might lead to the hypothesis (G). Accepted as explicit meaning of the author.
(G) Ben Affleck and Jennifer Garner, despite their divorce, have a good time together.	Inferred from (D) and (E), and satisfies the expectations of relevance in (B) and (C). Accepted as an implicit conclusion (1) of the utterance.
(H) Ben Affleck and Jennifer Garner are enjoying a period of time (a month) that they spend together after their divorce, like any couple that spends a romantic month together, but after getting married.	Inferred from (G) and the interpretation of the meaning of the concept-blend DIVORCE-MOON and satisfies the expectations of relevance in (B) and (C). Accepted as an implicit conclusion (2) of the utterance.
(I) Ben Affleck and Jennifer Garner show an example of civilized and mature attitude to divorce.	Overall interpretation of the author's utterance (explicit content (F) and implicatures (G) and (H), about which the reader might think in order to satisfy his or her expectations of relevance (B)) and the effect of contradiction that resulted from the combination of the concept DIVORCE and the concept HONEYMOON within the boundaries of the word "divorce-moon". Accepted as the general meaning of the utterance.

Tab. 1. The inferential process of decoding the utterance "...photographs surfaced of them vacationing in the Bahamas on a so-called "divorce-moon".

Thus, the occasionalism *divorce-moon* denotes a period of time that a divorced couple spends together, and they still get along very well and enjoy their vacation (positive meaning). The occasionalism draws the reader's attention, contributes to the understanding of the author's utterance and provides a basis for implicatures (I) and (H). The effect of contradiction, which is created by this unit, can be explained by the opposition of the expected and actual words (concept DIVORCE vs HONEY). The first concept with its negative meaning contradicts the positive meaning of the second concept and, consequently, it causes the contrast and a humorous effect.

The analysis shows that the use of occasional words may elicit several implicit conclusions; therefore, the author of the article describes not only the realities of the family life of Ben Affleck and

Jennifer Garner, but a new trend typical of Hollywood couples, which gradually becomes popular among ordinary people.

In addition, occasional units can produce a comic and sarcastic effect, as shown in the article in Time, June 27, 2016: "... *Two men who attempted to rob a McDonald's in eastern France – dubbed 'hamburglars' by social media outlets – were followed by a special-forces unit*".

The pattern of coining the occasionalism:

hamburger + burglar

Let us illustrate the steps of inferring the meaning of the utterance with an occasionalism

(A) The author wrote: " <i>Two men who attempted to rob a McDonald's in eastern France – dubbed 'hamburglars' by social media outlets...</i> "	<i>Decoding the author's utterance</i>
(B) The author's utterance is optimally relevant to the addressee	<i>Expectation raised by the recognition of the author's utterance as a communicative act and the acceptance of the presumption of relevance it automatically conveys.</i>
(C) The author's utterance will achieve relevance, because it concerns the reader's interests	<i>Expectation raised by (B), together with the fact that the description of the situation with burglars will be of interest to the reader.</i>
(D) An unsuccessful attempt to rob the fast food café took place.	<i>First assumption of the reader activated by the context of the article. Accepted as an implicit premise (1) of the author's utterance.</i>
(E) <i>Hamburglars</i> – (through inferring the meaning of the concept-recipient HAMBURGER and concept-donor BURGLAR that denotes criminals, who rob houses, flats and other building) is a word to nominate burglars who rob fast food cafes.	<i>Second assumption activated by the usage of an occasionalism "hamburglars" and background knowledge. Accepted as an implicit premise (2) of the author's utterance.</i>
(F) Two men, who attempted to rob the fast food café are HAMBURGLARS* (where HAMBURGLARS* is the meaning of an occasionalism " <i>hamburglars</i> ")	<i>First enriched interpretation of an explicit meaning of the utterance, as decoded in (A), which together with (D) and (E) might lead to the satisfaction of (C). Accepted as the explicit meaning, which the author tried to convey.</i>
(G) <i>Hamburglars</i> – criminals-losers, who break only into fast food cafés (through the prism of metonymy, the concept HAMBURGER will indicate fast food restaurants) for stealing money.	<i>Inferred from (E) and (F), and satisfying the expectations of relevance in (B) and (C). Accepted as an implicit conclusion of the author's utterance.</i>
(H) <i>Hamburglars</i> – criminals-losers, who rob fast food cafés.	<i>Overall interpretation of the author's utterance (explicit content (F) and an implicature (G), which comes to the reader's mind in order to satisfy his or her expectations of relevance (B)) and the comic and</i>

	<p><i>ironic effect that was created due to the combination of the concept HAMBURGER and the concept BURGLAR within the occasionalism "hamburglars". Accepted as the general meaning of the author.</i></p>
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Tab.2. The inferential process of decoding the utterance "... Two men who attempted to rob a McDonald's in eastern France – dubbed 'hamburglars' by social media outlets – were followed by a special-forces unit".

The comic and even ironic effect in the text is created by the strong contrast between HAMBURGERS (hamburgers) and BURGLARS (house/apartment robbers): first, the robbers changed the usual place of robbery (apartments, houses) to McDonald's. The press wants to emphasize the absurdity of the idea of robbing fast food cafés by placing a component HAMBURGER (through the prism of metonymy, it indicates either a chain of McDonald's or similar restaurants) in the structure of the occasionalism *hamburglars*. If we replace the concept-recipient HAMBURGER, with the concept MCDONALD'S, the comic and sarcastic effect of a lexical unit McDonaldburglars will be significantly reduced. Secondly, nobody expected that one would rob a café, which is famous for producing hamburgers, and therefore to highlight the unfortunate and unexpected choice of robbers, the media used this occasionalism.

3. CONCLUSIONS

In order to find occasional words, we analyzed articles of the American magazine TIME from June 11, 2012 to September 5, 2016. In our study, we examined only occasionalisms-blends, i.e. those that are formed on the edge of the "junction" of two concepts and which contain the most important characteristics of both concepts-components that constitute the blend. Thus, in the analyzed articles, we identified a number of occasionalisms-blends, which generally nominate relevant notions and phenomena in politics (rapefugees, Trumpward, Merkelvelliian), economy (petrostate, cosmeceutical [company]), social life (manterruption, coopetition, tea-a-tete), film industry (Potterverse, Blanchificent), ecology (bee-pocalypse, plyscrapers) and technological innovations (glassholes, pictogrammar) and so on.

We proved that occasionalisms used in media texts can influence the reader and reflect the author's emotional state due to the pragmatic component of its semantic structure, which is based on evaluation, emotional and expressive elements of the meaning. Lexical innovations often serve as a means to realize certain communication strategies of the author, such as drawing the attention of the reader, giving advice, persuasion, mocking, approval, condemnation. While placing occasional units in media texts, authors usually strived to produce the following effects: negative, positive, comical and sarcastic and the effect of contradiction, the effect of entertainment, the effect of expressiveness.

The conducted comprehensive research leads to the conclusion that occasional words that constitute the creative potential of a language, in the process of speech actualization, serve not only as a means of nomination, but also as a way of pragmatic influence on the intellectual and emotional state of the reader.

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Сіреджук О.Т. Лінгвопрагматичні характеристики оказіоналізмів в американському медійному дискурсі. *Журнал Прикарпатського університету імені Василя Стефаника*, 3 (4) (2016), 58–63.

У статті розглянуто поняття оказіоналізм і окреслено його місце та роль у медійному дискурсі. Аналізуючи оказіональні одиниці за теорією релевантності Д. Спербера та Д. Вілсон простежено інференційні процеси при трактуванні висловлень, що містять оказіоналізми. Завдяки аналізу висловлень виведено зміст оказіональних одиниць, описано їх прагматичні характеристики та виявлено ефекти, які спричиняють дані одиниці в медіатексті.

Ключові слова: оказіоналізм, теорія релевантності, медіадискурс.