

TILTM 2022**Topical Issues of Linguistics and Teaching Methods in Business and Professional Communication****COLLOCATIONS OF THE LEXICO-SEMANTIC FIELD
“MOVING FORWARD”: LINGUOPRAGMATIC APPROACH**

Elena I. Madinyan (a)*

*Corresponding author

(a) Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, Moscow, The Russian Federation, madinyan-ei@rudn.ru

Abstract

Collocations play an important role in meetings and business negotiations of English-speaking companies, as they allow for concise and clear communication of information. The aim of this study is to investigate the speech influence of collocations in New Zealand business discourse. The article uses the methods of continuous sampling, component and linguopragmatic analysis. Examples of collocations from transcripts of meetings and negotiations of the New Zealand branches of the international companies Unilever, FBU were studied. Particular attention is paid to the study of the types of speech influence of collocations of the lexico-semantic field "moving forward" in business discourse. The five most common types of speech influence of collocations of the lexico-semantic field "moving forward" have been identified: informing, social influence, simulated dialogue, evaluation and emotional influence. The tendency for collocations to belong simultaneously to several types of speech influence in business discourse has also been revealed. The obtained results contribute to the development of the theory of linguopragmatics, especially speech influence.

2672-815X © 2022 Published by European Publisher.

Keywords: Business discourse, collocation, lexico-semantic field “moving forward”, speech influence

1. Introduction

Language is seen as one of the tools for exerting influence in business discourse. By analysing the speech of a person or a group of people, their interests, opinions and viewpoints are identified. Influencing can be done through a specific speech formulation in order to introduce certain values and opinions in the mind of an individual. Business discourse, by definition, is characterised by the interaction and mutual influence of people in different areas of professional activity, and this implies a focus on reaching a mutually beneficial solution, compromise and accomplishment of multiple tasks (Malyuga, 2016; Malyuga et al., 2016; Malyuga et al., 2016; Malyuga & Orlova, 2016). With economic globalisation and developed trade relations between countries, the language of business is widely used, and the study of collocations as an integral part of the speech of company representatives during meetings and business negotiations requires special attention (Hutiu, 2017; Radyuk & Pankova, 2017; Vouillemin, 2020).

2. Problem Statement

In domestic and foreign linguistics, scholars have studied speech influence in business discourse because the interaction of business discourse with various linguistic phenomena, in our case collocations in business speech, is of interest to linguopragmatics (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2013; Cerne, 2019; Malyuga & Orlova, 2018; Nickerson & Planken, 2016).

3. Research Questions

Research questions are the following: What is collocation of LSF “moving forward”? To what extent is it effective in conducting speech influence?

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the linguistic and pragmatic characteristics of collocations within the lexical-semantic field (LSF) "moving forward" in New Zealand business discourse, namely, to describe their semantic expression and identify the types of speech influence.

5. Research Methods

We examined 1,450 examples of collocations from transcripts of meetings and negotiations of the New Zealand branches of the international companies Unilever, FBU, available online. The methodological basis of the work is formed by the systematic application of a number of scientific methods: the method of linguopragmatic analysis, the method of component analysis and the method of continuous sampling.

6. Findings

The social conditionality and the pragma-semantic properties of business discourse shape the characteristics of the linguistic phenomena found in the discourse (Romanova, 2020; Valuytseva & Ponomareva, 2021). This fact is reflected in the choice of lexemes and their combinations, which leads to the formation of collocations. In order to study collocations in business discourse it is necessary to understand that their occurrence is conditioned not only by syntactic and lexical parameters, but also by speech traditions and the speaker's linguistic thinking.

The identification and study of collocations in business discourse makes it possible to analyse the meanings of their components, as well as to identify the types of speech influence, which, in turn, contributes to the reflection of linguopragmatic characteristics of collocations.

6.1. Definition of collocation of LSF "moving forward"

Scholars offer different interpretations of the term "collocation": "the frequent co-occurrence of words at a certain distance from each other" (Moon, 1998); "a type of a stable word combination that allows some freedom" (Nesselhauf, 2005); "a weakly idiomatic phraseological expression with predominantly a word combination structure" (Baranov & Dobrovolsky, 2013, p. 73).

As we can see from the definitions, collocation is treated by scholars as a subtype of collocation that has retained relative combinative freedom. In this paper, we describe collocations included in the LSF "moving forward", therefore, having studied their characteristics, we developed the following definition: collocation of LSF "moving forward" is a special type of collocation, incorporating two or more components, in which one component is used in a figurative sense, and the other(s) in a direct one. An obligatory feature of collocation is that one of the components belongs to the lexical-semantic field "moving forward". Collocations of the LSF "moving forward" in the New Zealand national variant of English in business discourse are characterized by semantic unity, allowing a certain freedom, emotional and expressive evaluation and linguocultural specificity, as well as the presence of motivated meaning of at least one of the components.

The lexical units surrounding a collocation can both strengthen and weaken its linguopragmatic properties. When included in the discourse, being a tool for the implementation of the author's linguopragmatic intention, collocation can have a strong impact on the audience and perform various functions (Kozlova, 2018, p. 105).

Scholars (Shelestyuk, 2008; Sibul et al., 2019; Van Dijk, 2009) note that the relationship between semantic and linguopragmatic characteristics of collocations is significant in conveying expressivity and emotionality of collocations. The analysis of expressiveness, emotional and evaluative components of collocation meaning and its components shows the degree of the addressee's conviction in the content of their own statement, reveals their attitude to reality, to the message content, to the addressee and helps to determine the type of speech impact on the addressee.

6.2. Speech influence of collocations of LSF “moving forward”

There are broad and narrow interpretations of the concept of "speech influence". According to the interpretations of scholars (Sternin, 2009; Sergeicheva, 2002; Shelestyuk, 2008), the following definitions can be given. In a broad sense, speech influence is an arbitrary and involuntary transfer of information by a subject to a recipient (or group of recipients) in the process of speech communication in oral and/or written forms, which is carried out with the help of linguistic, paralinguistic and non-linguistic symbolic means and is determined by conscious and unconscious intentions of the addressee and the goals of communication – subject, communicative or informational, as well as the presuppositions and the specific situation. Speech influence in the broad sense has a reverse side: it is the communicative effect (result) that a particular message has on the recipient. In the narrow sense of speech influence is the impact made by a subject on the recipient through linguistic, paralinguistic and non-linguistic symbolic means in the process of speech communication, characterized by specific subject goals speaker, which include changing the personal meaning of an object for the recipient categorical restructuring of his consciousness, changing behavior, mental state or psychophysiological processes. The achievement of these goals requires the addressee to solve a number of tasks: overcoming the protective barrier of the recipient ("negociation"), "imposing" certain images and thoughts ("eidetico = cognitive" suggestion), emotions and attitudes (emotional = attitudinal suggestion).

In this study, following Gryshechko (2008), we define speech influence as any speech communication, taken in the aspect of its intentionality and purposefulness. It is a speech communication described from the position of one of the communicators, when one considers oneself as a subject of influence, and the interlocutor - as an object (p. 53).

Let us characterise the research material through the prism of linguopragmatics, i.e. firstly, let us define the social and status parameters of the addressee and the recipient. Unilever is a large international company producing food products and household chemicals, Fletcher Building is a major supplier of building materials in New Zealand and Australia. These organisations are internationally recognised, are strong competitors in the global market and have a significant impact on the market. Their target audiences during meetings include investors, shareholders, consumers from around the world and many others.

Scholars point out that there is a social distance between representatives of different parties. The interlocutor is seen as an official person, a bearer of a social role (company director, manager, administrative staff, investor, etc.). Also, social roles can be represented in the form of the following hierarchies: "supervisor" - "subordinate", "seller" - "buyer", "client" - "customer" (Malyuga & Yermishina, 2021).

It is also necessary to note the conditions and purposes of speech acts. We have looked at examples from transcripts of meetings and negotiations available online. The purpose of these transcripts is to communicate information related to the current market position of companies as well as their plans and strategies to an audience including potential investors, economists, marketers, shareholders and other stakeholders.

During the detailed examination of the transcripts under study four key features were highlighted:

1. Clarity of the message, absence of ambiguity.

2. The special importance of the informative function.

3. The use of linguistic means to attract the attention of the target audience to a particular phenomenon.

4. Decision-oriented and, depending on the purpose of the meeting, setting of future strategies and trajectories.

A distinction is made between types and methods of speech influence. Methods include convincing, suggestion and inducement. The types include social influence; influence with the help of artistic images; informing; argumentation-proving; argumentation-guidance; simulated dialogue; persuasion; appeal; command; compulsion; evaluation; emotional influence; mental programming (Shelestyuk, 2008, p. 122).

The following types of speech influence were identified within the study of the collocations of the LSF "moving forward":

1. Social influence

The "social influence" type assumes a virtual addressee, which entails clichéd phrases aimed at interaction. This type is mainly implemented in the form of a promise. Promise is an effective type of influence because this sub-type is programmed for results. Let us consider the following example:

*We have been and will continue to **pull all of the levers of pricing and saving**. We've already taken significant pricing action in key markets through a combination of list price increases, pack changes on key price point packs, mix actions and focused promotional management (Unilever PLC (UL) Q2 2021 Earnings Call Transcript).*

The collocation *to pull the levers of pricing and saving* is a promise, as indicated by the use of the auxiliary verb *will*. Together with the metaphor "*to pull the levers*" that conveys the readiness to act immediately, therefore this collocation is characterised by a strong expressiveness and is an effective tool of speech influence.

2. Informing

The type "informing" consists in reporting or transmitting information in order to convey its meaning to the recipient. Often, the collocations of LSF "moving forward" act as a fragment of an informational message, constituting an important part of it, because due to the semantic characteristics of this LSF, they reflect the results or various indicators of the company's activity. Here is an example of the following statement:

*While we delivered strong first half of the year, it's a result of our continued focus on operational excellence, which is behind our **step up in competitiveness** and the associated good financial performance (Unilever PLC (UL) Q2 2021 Earnings Call Transcript).*

The collocation *step up in competitiveness* that means "increase of competitiveness" is part of a broader information message. The use of the LSF collocation "moving forward" contributes to a shorter and more precise transmission of information, thanks to the figurative and metaphorical nature of the noun formed from the phrasal verb *to step up*.

3. Simulated dialogue

The type of speech influence "simulated dialogue" is presented in the form of an address, rhetorical question and question-answer complexes. It should be noted that in business discourse the

above-mentioned acts are possible both in the form of an address by the speaker to a single recipient and by the speaker to the audience. Let us consider an example of an address to a general audience:

*Just a few quick introductory remarks from me and then we can **move** to Q&A pretty **swiftly** (FBU, Equity Analysts meeting, 2020).*

The collocation *to move swiftly* is used in this passage to reinforce the message that the opening remarks will be "swift". This collocation draws a parallel between moving on to the next stage of a meeting and moving swiftly (on foot or by vehicle), thus emphasising that the process should be "continuous" and "manageable". In this example, the address is implicit, as the speaker uses the first person plural pronoun *we* which in conjunction with the collocation *to move swiftly* helps the addressee to describe his or her subsequent actions, while appealing to and holding the audience's attention.

4. Evaluation

The type of speech influence "evaluation" is realised through the evaluative component of the collocation. The evaluation component can express praise, approval, disapproval, censure, condemnation, justification, accusation, etc. In the following example, we will look at a collocation with the evaluative component "risk":

*A great example is how we further extended the Dove Care & Protect Antibacterial range, which combines efficacy against germs with the unique care of Dove. And is now available in over 50 countries. That's a good example of **big bet innovation**, rolling out fast and at scale (Unilever PLC (UL) Q2 2021 Earnings Call Transcript).*

The component of the collocation *big bet* comes from the game of poker, where it refers to "the highest bet that is used in the final rounds of the game to increase the amount of the bank and thereby provide an opportunity to bluff". A recipient who is familiar with the phenomenon of *big bet* will perceive the object characterised by the term as being highly risky. Consequently, the communicative purpose of the above speech act will be achieved.

5. Emotional influence

This type of speech influence consists in the projection of the author's emotional state to the recipient. Emotional influence can be expressed in the form of encouragement, consolation, complaint, joke, ridicule, boasting, insult, threat, as well as expressing emotions (e.g. regret, joy, bewilderment). For example, the collocation *cost inflation* reflects the speaker's regret at the real price increase caused by the rising costs of production:

*We also confirmed at our trading statement that we expected to deliver a slight improvement in underlying operating margin. Since then, over the last quarter, we've seen further significant **cost inflation** emerge (Unilever PLC (UL) Q2 2021 Earnings Call Transcript).*

7. Conclusion

The study has shown that in the business discourse of the New Zealand national variant of English the collocations of LSF "moving forward" perform speech influence within the following types: social influence, informing, simulated dialogue, evaluation and emotional influence.

These types of speech influence as a percentage are shown in the following diagram (see Figure 1):

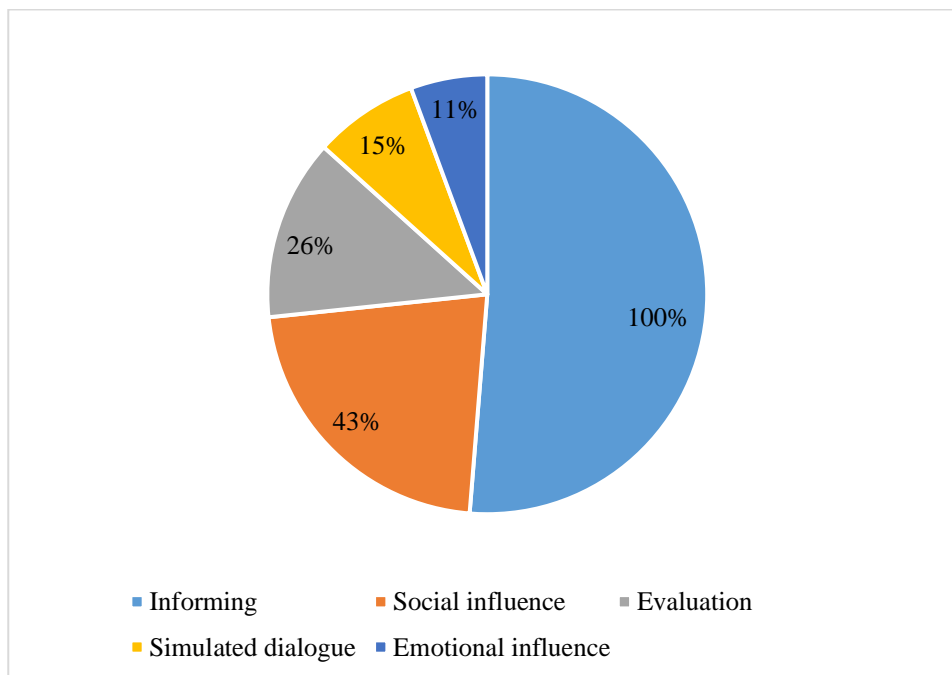


Figure 1. Types of speech influence of collocations of LSF "moving forward"

The "informing" type (100%) is present in all the examples, as all collocations of the LSF "moving forward" convey information to the recipient. Next follows the social influence (43%), which is due to the nature of the negotiation, which consists in discussing, defining conditions, promising, etc. 26% account for the "evaluation" type, which indicates the presence of an evaluative component in collocations and expresses the speaker's attitude towards the subject of the discussion. 15% represent "simulated dialogue", which is an effective way to keep the listener's attention by simulating interaction with the recipient. Finally, the type of "emotional influence" is 11%, which is achieved by projecting the speaker's emotional state onto the recipient using lexical means. The indispensability of speech influence in business discourse is based on the need to exchange information, to express the speaker's attitude to the subject of discussion, to hold the listener's attention, as well as to project and reflect the emotional state of the communicants, which contributes to the effective implementation of the communicative intent of the addressee.

References

- Baranov, A. N., & Dobrovolsky, D. O. (2013). *Fundamentals of phraseology* (short course). Flinta; Nauka.
- Bargiela-Chiappini, F., Nickerson, C., & Planken, B. (2013). *Business Discourse*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137024930>
- Cerne, A. (2019). *Moralising Global Markets: The Creativity of International Business Discourse*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-75981-4>
- Gryshechko, E. G. (2008). Definition of the concept of speech influence and types of this influence // *Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4, 53-59.
- Hutiu, O. (2017). Teaching negotiation in a globalised world: Benefits of a genre approach. *Training, Language and Culture*, 1(3), 39-55. <https://doi.org/10.29366/2017tlc.1.3.3>

- Kozlova, E. A. (2018). Presuppositions in the aspect of speech influence. *Voprosy Kognitivnoi Lingvistiki*, 2, 103-111. <https://doi.org/10.20916/1812-3228-2018-2-103-111>
- Malyuga, E. (2016). Exploiting the potential of ICT: assessment of students' knowledge. In 3rd International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on Social Sciences and Arts, SGEM 2016. AUG 24-30, 2016. Book 1: *Psychology And Psychiatry, Sociology And Healthcare, Education Conference Proceedings, Vol. III*. (pp. 319-325).
- Malyuga, E. N., & Orlova, S. N. (2016). The art of business interviewing in ESP training. In *8th International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies (EDULEARN)*, (pp. 7231-7235). <https://doi.org/10.21125/edulearn.2016.0574>
- Malyuga, E. N., & Orlova, S. N. (2018). *Linguistic pragmatics of intercultural professional and business communication*. Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-68744-5>
- Malyuga, E. N., & Yermishina, V. E. (2021) The expressive function of colloquialisms in professional discourse: *The linguopragmatic aspect // E3S Web of Conferences*, 284(3). <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202128408012>
- Malyuga, E., Litvinov, A., & Panicheva, E. (2016). Methods of effective teaching written communication. In *8th International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies (EDULEARN)*, (pp. 1967-1970). <https://doi.org/10.21125/edulearn.2016.1389>
- Malyuga, E., Shvets, A., & Tikhomirov, I. (2016). Computer-based analysis of business communication language. In *Proceedings of 2016 SAI Computing Conference, SAI 2016*, (pp. 229-232). <https://doi.org/10.1109/SAI.2016.7555987>
- Moon, R. (1998). *Fixed Expressions and Idioms in English: A Corpus Based Approach*. Oxford Univ. Press.
- Nesselhauf, N. (2005). *Collocation in a Learner Corpus*. John Benjamin Publishing Co. <https://doi.org/10.1075/scl.14>
- Nickerson, C., & Planken, B. (2016). *Introducing Business English*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315694337>
- Radyuk, A. V., & Pankova, V. Yu. (2017). Developing Business English skills using case studies in the framework of multilevel education. *Training, Language and Culture*, 1(3), 30-38. <https://doi.org/10.29366/2017tlc.1.3.2>
- Romanova, I. D. (2020). Human types and persuasion in advertising. *Issues of Applied Linguistics*, 38, 114-134. <https://doi.org/10.25076/vpl.38.06>
- Sergeicheva, V. (2002). *The techniques of persuasion. Communication strategy and tactics*. SPb.
- Shelestyuk, E. V. (2008). *Speech Influence: Ontology and Research Methodology*. Chelyab. state university. Encyclopedia.
- Sibul, V., Vetrinskaya, V., & Grishechko, E. (2019). Study of Precedent Text Pragmatic Function in Modern Economic Discourse. In book: *Functional Approach to Professional Discourse Exploration in Linguistics Publisher: Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-32-9103-4_5
- Sternin, I. A. (2009). *Fundamentals of speech influence*. Istoki.
- Unilever PLC (UL) Q2. (2021). *Earnings Call Transcript*. <https://www.fool.com/earnings/call-transcripts/2021/04/30/unilever-plc-ul-q1-2021-earnings-call-transcript/>
- Valuytseva, I. I., & Ponomareva, S. S. (2021). Linguocultural aspect of the American speech etiquette by the example of Quentin Tarantino films. *Issues of Applied Linguistics*, 43, 7-37. <https://doi.org/10.25076/vpl.43.01>
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2009). *Society and discourse. How social contexts influence text and talk*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511575273>
- Vouillemin, D. (2020). Business cultural training in a globalised economy. *Training, Language and Culture*, 4(1), 33-43. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2521-442X-2020-4-1-33-43>