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PRAGMATIC PECULIARITIES OF INSINCERE SPEECH ACTS IN Z. SMITH'S 'ON BEAUTY'

Irina V. Kozhukhova (a)*, Oksana L. Zabolotneva (b)
*Corresponding author

(a) Chelyabinsk State University, Chelyabinsk, Russia, vinantov@mail.ru
(b) Chelyabinsk State University, Chelyabinsk, Russia, zoxl@mail.ru

Abstract

University novels, being a part of fiction discourse, comprise elements commonly associated with everyday life and making it true-to-life an author uses a make-believe strategy. Thus it encourages studying speech acts in fiction. University novel is a component of the English and American fiction discourse and a unique genre, academic environment of which is characterized by a defined setting, protagonists as well as original themes. University novel covers a wide range of topical issues and events that occur outside universities and are drastically discussed by teachers and students alike. Based on 'On beauty' university novel the article investigates insincere speech acts of various types, illustrating both quantity and quality of each selected group. With the help of general linguistic methods (elements of intent analysis, speech act analisys, etc.) true intentions of a speech act are reveald by the context. Perlocutionary force of deceit is mostly realised by assertives. Quesitives being the least frequent category of insincere speech acts are mostly used in small talks and generally pretending to be polite. The research shows that insincere speech is commonlycharacterized by pauses, hesitations, repetitions, and paralipses. The article also reveals some syntactic and structural peculiarities of insincere speech acts as found in the university novel 'On Beauty' by Z. Smith.

Keywords: Assertives, commissives, directives, expressives, fiction discourse, insincerity, quesitives, speech act, university novel.

1. Introduction

The research discusses the importance of understanding some specific features of university novels as an integral part of fiction discourse or to be more precise, university discourse. Academic novels explain indicative events and changes as well as the most essential tendencies in the development of science and education, language, art, culture, politics and national identity as well as alienation of emigrants. Absorbing some features of other genres, such as initiation, historical and modernist novel as well as romance, this type of genre is unique in itself. University novel seems to be resourceful for researchers of fiction discourse, intercultural communication, stylistics, text linguistics, and pragmatics. It possesses singular linguo-stylistic, sociocultural, and linguistic discourse peculiarities.

1.1. Themes discussed in university novels

The representatives of various linguo-cultural communities (teachers, students, and university staff) discuss urgent and pressing up-to-date themes such as methods of teaching, ways of development of university, education, language and society, politics, discrimination, family relations, war conflicts, etc. Moreover, university novel covers a wide range of those political events, which occur outside universities, and are radically discussed by teachers and students alike. At the same time, the protagonists' communication can be characterized by both communicative success and communicative failure. Usually communicative failure happens because of lack of mutual understanding between a professor and a student, representatives of various generations, cultures, ethnic groups, gender, etc. Researchers reveal and analyse the language peculiarities and examine success and failure in communication of the representatives of various linguistic and cultural communities. In university novels one of the repetitive themes is considered to be the theme of disclosing of a linguistic personality of an emigrant-professor in foreign linguo-culture (described in the university novels by V. Nabokov, Ph. Roth, and Z. Smith).

1.2. University novel "On Beauty" by Z. Smith

University discourse covers a wide range of those political events, which occur outside universities, and are widely discussed by teachers and students. "On Beauty" is a novel by the outstanding British author Zadie Smith. The plot is apparently simple and predictable. The story describes different but extremely interwoven lives of two families living in the university town outside Boston, in the United States of America. There are five members in the Belsey family: the head of the family, susceptible Howard Belsey; his strong willed and beautiful African-American wife Kiki; and their children, Jerome, Zora and Levi. Howard's opponent, Monty Kipps, lives in Britain with his wife Carlene and their children Victoria and Michael. All of them have their own stories, strengths and weaknesses. The discussed themes in the novel are, no doubt, topical and urgent for the contemporary world. They are about ethnic, cultural and class differences in the American and British societies, liberal and traditional academic values, as well as the perception of the notion 'beauty' as such.

Despite its predictability the story has unexpected twists, for example, when Carlene and Kiki become friends despite the serious tensions between their families. A typical for the university novels idea is highlited in the novel as well. It is about a failure of one of the main protagonists to publish a long-

awaited manuscript. A reputable university professor Howard Belsey planned to write his scientific work several years ago and it turns out to be a dream, an illusion, an impossible project. The Belsey family faces the problems connected with the fallout of both Howard's career and affair with his university colleague. The novel is definitely worth while researching.

1.3. The theoretical basis of the research

The subject of the study is the analysis of some specific features of the university novels and linguistic personality of a lecturer in fiction discourse, university discourse in particular, and insincere speech acts of various types. The university novel "On Beauty" written Smith (2018, 2010) is analyzed in the practical part of the research. If we refer to the previous studies, we can trace down that academic fiction appeared in the USA in the beginning of the fifties in the twentieth century. A few novels written by American writers were published at that period and they are traditionally considered to be the first ones of the discussed type. Typically, they were intended as a satire of academics mosly based on the authors' teaching experiences in universities. The novel "Pictures from an Institution" (1986) by American poet Randall Jarrell is also a satire, focusing on the eccentricity of academic environment, especially the interpersonal relationships among the protagonists and their private lives.

David Lodge is considered to be one of the outstanding masters of this genre and retains the title of Honorary Professor of Modern English Literature at Birmingham. "His fictional work is 'Changing places' the first part of a brilliantly comic trilogy that included 'Small World' and 'Nice work'" (Delaney, Ward, & Fiorina, 2010, p. 28). These books give a satirical account of the university life, as well as share recurring characters. There already exist available in this field works by researchers, linguists, and literary critics, such as O.U. Antsyferova, T.N. Khomutova, O.A. Kutsepalova, Kvirikadze (2015), I.I. Parulina, Serdyuk (2010), Showalter (2017) and others. For example, the article by Khomutova and Parulina (2018) focuses on the problem of university discourse in general. In it a basic integral model of university discourse is proposed. The results of the integral study of the university discourse in the university novel are given and university discourse typology within the framework of the communicative activity paradigm is analyzed. The actual universal integral model of discourse in university novel is offered. The article by Novikova (2016) deals with the characteristic of postmodern perusal of the "Campus Trilogy" by David Lodge. Using the hermeneutic analysis the author explores intertextual links in the novels and makes a conclusion that dealing with the meaning of the trilogy depends on the depth of understanding these links. The article by Kutsepalova (2015) touches upon the main subgenre characteristics of academic fiction on the example of the novel "On Beauty" by Zadie Smith. A special attention is paid to revealing the image of the protagonist, Professor Howard Belsey, the projection of the conflict of his scientific views and the views of his colleagues on his private life, there is an analysis of the chronotop of this novel as the main feature of university fiction.

In our previous articles, ex., "Some specific features of the English fiction discourse" (Zabolotneva, 2018) we also considered university novel as a component of the English and American fiction discourse. We paid our particular attention to 'lecture', which is considered to be an invariable component of the academic environment. Lecture should be preserved as an integral part of academic and cultural traditions, heritage of higher education, token of social relations and the style of communication,

which is adopted in a particular linguo-cultural community and national culture. It is one of the components of the competence of professors and senior lecturers. The latest research was on face-threatening speech acts in academic fiction (Kozhukhova & Zabolotneva, 2019). Practical value of our previous research consists in the possibility of applying its results in preparing for lecture courses and seminars on modern British and American literature as well as intercultural communication and stylistics.

1.4. Linguistic insincerity

Speech act theory, being quite popular recent years, concentrates its attention to the postulates and Maxims of communication, aspects of politeness, so the ephasis on insincere communication is relatively rare. The main works of the Russian-language field covering this topic, as well as the scope of our research, include the following: linguistic aspects of the expression of insincerity (on the material of the English language) – Plotnikova (2000), work by L.R. Bezuglaya is based on the distinction between insincere speech acts and insincere speech genres, article by Palevsky (2012) considers a more general topic - insincere communication as a whole.

The study of the linguistic aspects of insincerity is an urgent problem of pragmatics. In our study, we dwell on the approach of Plotnikova (2000) insincerity. In her work, she draws a parallel between discursive strategies of insincerity and politeness and reveals a number of correspondences. Both courtesy and insincerity are characteristic not only of individuals, but of entire social groups or public institutions. Insincerity is defined as "a discursive strategy of a linguistic personality based on the expression of a special personal meaning, the essence of which is to replace true (from the point of view of a given linguistic personality) propositions with false ones" (Plotnikova, 2000, p. 12). The strategy of insincerity generated by the speaker can be realized through a monologue, dialogue, initial and response remarks. The main signs of insincere discourse are the expression of non-facts, ambiguity and denial of facts.

According to Palevsky (2012) "the semantic basis of insincere discourse is the expression of a special mentality inherent in an insincere linguistic personality" (p. 261).

The main criterion for taxonomy developed by Plotnikova (2000), is the time required to create and process insincere discourse before presenting to the recipient. The scientist identified the following types of insincere discourse: spontaneously generated, pre-prepared and periodically renewed. A true proposition is replaced by a false one and a re-expression of thought occurs through certain language means and in a certain form. The linguistic way of describing the meaning at the time of its creation is the use of meta-sentences, metatexts, or meta-discourse. The process of generating such a discourse takes place in real time. An insincere linguistic personality acts without thinking through a statement in advance.

In contrast to spontaneous discourse, a prepared insincere discourse is thought over in advance and changed until its final version is fixed in the consciousness of an insincere linguistic personality. At the same time, the fact of preparation is carefully hidden, the speaker is trying to imitate spontaneous communication. To create a prepared insincere discourse, semantic digests are used - the main provisions that are issued by the addressee as true. Thus, the process of preparing this type of discourse is carried out within the "semantic framework". The main components of this mental activity are the formulation of possible questions and the elaboration of answers that would guarantee the successful implementation of

insincere discourse. The semantic volume of insincere discourse until it is directly expressed by linguistic means is much larger than linguistic.

The specificity of periodically renewed insincere discourse is that "it is generated as spontaneous or prepared in advance, and, having turned out to be successful from the point of view of the insincere speaker, is reproduced by him repeatedly, with various transformations" (Plotnikova, 2000, p. 12). This type of discourse is distinguished by the fact that it is presented as necessary. An insincere linguistic person takes control of the situation, acting on his own free will or at the direction of a third party. Periodically renewed insincere discourse is characterized by a high degree of detachment from the utterance, which can be perceived as a citation. In addition, the principle of selectivity and freedom of a linguistic personality is also characteristic of this type of discourse. According to this principle, the speaker seeks to fulfill a communicative role through the use of insincere discourse not by coercion, but by his own will.

To describe the communicative situation, which contains insincere discourse, Minsky (1988) introduced several terms. The frame means "the structure of representations of the stereotypical situation" (Minsky, 1988). A scenario refers to a standard communicative situation, which is a sequence of interrelated events. At the moment of generation of insincere discourse, frames and scripts, which are fixed in the memory of communicants, correspond with the real situation of communication.

It can be concluded that using insincere discourse, the speaker puts a personal meaning into the statement that is subordinate to a specific goal. Depending on the conditions of generation, the process of replacing true propositions with false ones proceeds in different ways. The process of creating and interpreting insincere discourse is associated with ideas fixed in the human mind; therefore, when analyzing it, the cognitive-psychological aspect should be taken into account. Insincere discourse can be defined as a communicative event in which the communicants choose a strategy of insincerity, hiding the actual semantic volume of statements and imitating spontaneous communication in order to achieve the objectives by replacing true propositions with false ones.

2. Problem Statement

The purpose of the research consists in revealing and analysing some specific features of the university discourse from the standpoint of insincere speech acts. One of its objectives is also connected with the study and analysis of literature on the phenomenon of non-fiction academic or university environment. Thus, the experts in the field assert that:

The university environment is, first of all, a community of the most educated, qualified and authoritative scientists. The higher school is a closed language environment with a given system of internal and external communication, which is characterized as intercultural. The cultural atmosphere of people is a perfect way to adapt to the existing physical and biological surroundings. Cultural traditions make life easier by providing ready problem-solving solutions, establishing models of relationships and determining ways to preserve the unity of nation, group or organization. (Lingvokultura universiteta, 2016, p. 68)

2.1.The practical basis of the research

The practical part of the research is the novel "On Beauty" by Z. Smith and insincere speech acts taken from the text by routine continuous selection with the help of general lingustic methods. All in all 48 instances of insincere speech acts were analyzed. Note that all the examples in the present article are taken from the "On Beauty" only.

3. Research Questions

In the course of the research it is possible to identify some peculiarities of the English and American university novels such as modeling of protagonists on stereotyped images, a description of various educational traditions and recurring themes such as methods of teaching, education, language and society, generation gap, politics, discrimination, family issues, wars and war conflicts, etc. One of the objectives of the study aims at examining linguistic personality of a lecturer as reflected in their speech by using insincere speech acts. The main issue is to analyse and show peculiarities (if any) of insincere speech acts in the university novels.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the research consists in revealing and analyzing some specific features of the English fiction discourse, to be more precise these are: peculiar linguistic features of university novels as a genre, functioning of insincere speech acts in university novels, general peculiarities of insincerity in fiction.

5. Research Methods

In compliance with the purpose of the research, the following methods have been undertaken: the analysis of the literature (fiction and non-fiction) and the publications concerning the studied problem, contextual, descriptive, cultural-historic and comparative analyses. General lingustic methods are used in the research: linguopragmatic method (in communication influence analysis), intent-analysis (general analysis of intentions in sincere and insincere speech acts, false intentions of a speaker), speech act analysis (description of general and basic characteristics of various speech acts and how they are performed in a language), description (descriptions of the results).

6. Findings

On the basis of this stage of the research we can conclude that in general academic environment can be characterized by the following features: 1) it is a closed intercultural language environment with a given system of internal and external communication, 2) it is a perfect way to adapt to the existing physical and biological surroundings, 3) its cultural and academic traditions make life easier by providing ready problem-solving solutions, determining ways to preserve the unity of a group or organization, society or nation.

All in all a sum of 48 insincere speech acts being analyzed and the general analysis shows that the results of the taken university novel coincide greatly with the analysis of insincere speech acts in modern English fiction (Kozhukhova & Chiglintseva, 2018). Thus the idea of general distribution of speech acts (including insincere) is more or less the same (Table 1).

Table 01. Distribution of insincere speech acts in Z.Smith "On beauty"

Type of insincere speech act	%, "On beauty"	%, fiction (Kozhukhova & Chiglintseva, 2018)
Insincere assertives	52	49,6
Insincere expressives	25	34,5
Insincere commissives	10,4	7,8
Insincere directives	8,4	6
Insincere quesitives	4,2	2,1
Total	100	100

Depending on intentions of an insincere linguistic personality five types of insincere speech acts can be identified: assertives, quesitives, expressives, directives and comissives. The analyzed novel shovs the assertives prevail. Such a peculiarity, as we see from Table 1, is not a unique feature of university novels only. As a rule, assertives give information on a fact or event. Insincere assertives are used to make a speaker do something or evoke certian emotions or win round:

'Just come back weekends. Go to church. Sunday lunch. Family stuff.'

<...> He handed them to Howard, who pushed them into his pocket without looking, So, he hates the idea of this marriage even more than I do, thought Howard. He can barely even be more polite tome.

Insincerity of almost all linguistic material is revealed on the context level, taken out of context the speech act above can be considered a standard example of phatic communication, but usage of simple sentences does not imply interest and involvement into the conversation.

Expressives are characterized by the presence of emotionally colored, evaluative vocabulary; on the syntactic level emotions are conveyed with the help of exclamatory sentences. In the given example, which can be interpreted both as an expressive and assertive, we see the high emotions of the utterance due to the repetition of phrases, emphasis (which italicised, though within this research we subtitute italicised emphasis with non-italicised lexemes), emotional lexemes *too, really, completely*:

'Yes – of course, of course, of course, no one's saying there's an argument – I'm just saying, and I'm hoping your father will appreciate this, that Jerome's really too young – and he's younger than he actually is – emotionally he's much younger, completely inexpreienced – much more so than you probably realize –'

<...> 'I think they are both much, much too young to get married, Michael, I really do".

For commissives where a speaker makes a promise to carry out an action, the usage of performatives with the semantics of promise in the illocutionary part is typical. Eg., being from London and having a strong English accent, Professor Howard Belsey did not achieve the same success as his American colleagues. A small group of students attend his lectures, but the professor continues to conduct his optional course in history of art, knowing in advance about the inevitable failure. Students pay attention only to the pragmatic side of any issue. They are primarily interested in their own careers and

prosperity. The choice of lecture courses by university students is a humiliating procedure for teachers, especially for Professor Howard Belsey. He is not able to meet the expectations of his students: *"<…> the likelihood of the professor in question having any real-world power that might translate into an actual capacity to write that letter which would effectively place them – three years from now – on an internship at the New Yorker or in the Pentagon or in Clinton's Harlem offices or at French Vogue – and that all this private research, all this Googling, would lead them rightly to conclude that taking a class on 'Constructions of the Human', which did not come under their core requirements for the semester, which was taught by a human being himself over the hill, in a bad jacket, with eighties hair, who was under-published, politically marginal and badly situated at the top of a building without proper heating and no elevator, was not in their best interests. There's a reason it's called shopping."*. Hyperbole "recommendations that will help to get an internship at the New Yorkeror in the Pentagon or in Clinton's Harlem offices or at French Vogue" makes the situation comical. Assistant Smith J. Miller was well aware of Howard's state of affairs, but in an effort to encourage he promises a full house at the professor's lectures:*'Ah got a good feelin' about this semester,' said Smith, and whistled and released his sprightly Southern chuckle. 'Expectin' standing room only'.*

When using directives, the speaker wants the recipient to take some action. Moreover, the fulfillment of actions is not required:

'Victoria, go and see on the stew, please. Go'

Victioria stood up and slammed her chair into the table. <…>Mrs. Kipps smiled again.

Insincerity in this case is realized by indirectness - formally we see a direct request (simple infinitive + politeness marker *please*. A special attention should be paid to the formula of the request, while standard requests in English usually have an indirect form and contain modality or other modifiers in their expression), which is intensified by the verb in the imperative mood. Further, the context shows that Mrs. Kips thus got rid of the undesiredspeaker (or, listener)

Insincere quesitives are speech acts containing a question in the answer on whish a speaker is not is not interested. Most commonly they are used to maintain a conversation and to implement a politeness strategy, also participants of communication can use insincere quesitives to hide the fact of deception or true feelings, as well as to delay time:

'Suddenly she was behind him. 'Where's the Kippses' phone number?' she demanded, although they both knew the answer to this one'.

In this case, we are faced with an insincere conventionalized indirect speech act, which is interpreted as demand in the speech support group. This requirement can be considered insincere given the previous remark in which it was supposed to discuss an unpleasant topic:

'What did you say?' asked Kiki. 'What are you saying? I can't hear you'.

A demand *'Where's the Kippses' phone number?*has the intention to delay time and change the topic.

7.   Conclusion

At this stage of the study we have come to the conclusion that university novel is an integral part of fiction discourse. It is a unique genre, academic environment of which is characterized by specific

features. The study of linguistic personality of a lecturer reveals manifestation of its individual characteristics; allows to identify the concepts, ideas and values relevant to native speakers and to the representatives of different linguo-cultural communities. University novels illustrate significant events and changes, as well as essential trends in the development of language, art and culture. The characters are constructed on stereotyped images that make the reader recognize their teachers, colleagues or students, as well as experience a different range of feelings and emotions.

The data shows the usage of insincere speech acts both in the university environment and outside it (in this case, it is not the environment that forms the way of sincerity / insincerity, but the linguistic personality itself). Based on the results of the analysis, two main conclusions can be made: 1) insincerity is "revealed" due to the context or group of speech accompaniment and 2) insincerity can be in a borderline state with indirectness.

Thus, the English university novel is an inexhaustible source for researchers of its specific features.

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