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ORAL ACADEMIC DISCOURSE AS AN OBJECT OF STUDY (GENRE-STYLISTIC FEATURES)

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Abstract

The article presents the concept of a linguistic description of Russian academic discourse in the context of the latest achievements in the study of oral scientific and professional communication. Scientific and professional communication (academic discourse) is a specific communicative type of modern professional activity aimed at solving scientific and production problems. The purpose of the work is to identify specific linguistic and extralinguistic features of oral scientific speech, including its prosodic aspect, to consider topics, situations, genre varieties and linguistic features of oral academic discourse. The study is conducted on the basis of real audio recordings of oral texts of scientific topics processed by the method of audial (hearing) analysis. This factor necessitates the use in the academic discourse of oral-speech colloquial means, which are not random foreign-style elements in it, but participate, along with general literary and book-writing means, in the formation of a special speech system of oral scientific speech. The description of the linguistic specificity of oral scientific and professional communication presented in the article undoubtedly makes a significant contribution to the development of the theory of speech genres and modern linguistic descriptions of Russian speech in general. The study can serve as the basis for creating a speech portrait of a Russian language personality in the field of academic discourse. The developed principles and research methods can be used in pragmalinguistic studies of other areas of oral communication of modern Russian society.

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1. Introduction

Recently, one of the main areas of science and socio-psychological research of scientific activity has been the study of the nature and methods of scientific communication. The focus of the researchers is the problem of speech contacts and relationships both between members of scientific teams and between individual scientists, problems of interdisciplinary scientific connections, formal and informal communications, issues of international scientific cooperation, etc. It is logical that the issues of professionalization of teaching the Russian language begin to gradually occupy its proper place in textbooks and manuals on the culture of speech. However, one cannot fail to note that, compared with other functional varieties of the literary language, the oral form of scientific speech has not yet been clearly studied, and the available linguistic and methodological descriptions of this form of professional communication have not yet entered into the wide practice of teaching.

A necessary quality of the native speaker (user) of a special language is professionalism, which requires knowledge of the conceptual-categorical apparatus of a certain field of activity and the corresponding system of terms. In the speech practice of a specialist, the language becomes monothematic regardless of the field of knowledge and subject of communication, saturated with special words and expressions, which is possible only when the subjects of communication shift to the professional level of consciousness.

Modern scientific studies lead to the conclusion that the basis of scientific creativity and creative communication within the framework of science is speech interaction, i.e. dialogue as a form of communication. The extreme dialogism of a special language, whether written or spoken, is based on the dialogical structure of the phenomenon of cognition: in a scientific dialogue, not only the process of scientific communication is realized, but also the process of collective scientific creativity in its dynamics.

The concept of “scientific and professional dialogue” is thus interpreted by researchers more broadly and includes at least three aspects: 1) the type of speech activity; 2) the process of professional communication; 3) the process of collective scientific and professional creativity. Performing various functions, the language of professional communication itself becomes a person’s function in the process of its activity. The implementation of this social-role function of a person requires certain knowledge and skills acquired in the learning process.

2. Problem Statement

The results of the theoretical descriptions of academic discourse found their linguistic and methodological interpretation in a number of applied works, in particular in the field of teaching the basics of the culture of scientific speech to different categories of students: foreign students studying Russian as a specialty language, as well as Russian students and graduate students who master the style of academic writing and oral presentation in the framework of professional scientific topics (Belukhina et al., 2008; Ilyina & Zolotareva, 2019; Lapteva, 2000; Romanova & Skorikova, 2018).

In modern language teaching practice, the development of scientific and professional communication skills is given special attention in connection with the use of new information

technologies (Kirsanova & Lazarev, 2018; Skorikova et al., 2019), which is in line with world trends in educational and academic research (Inozemtsev et al., 2016; Ivlev et al., 2017; Karpov, 2017).

The importance of delivering different categories of oral forms of scientific and professional communication to students determines the need to comprehensively consider the specifics of academic discourse as an object of linguistic study, which is the main problem of this study.

3. Research Questions

Scientific and professional communication (academic discourse) is a specific communicative type of modern professional activity aimed at solving scientific and production problems. Communication within the framework of this communicative sphere is based on oral scientific speech, the specificity of which is due to the following factors: 1) the oral form; 2) scientific and professional content; 3) the nature of the addressee; 4) features of the communicative situation of speech. The linguistic features of Russian oral scientific speech, its genres and text-forming properties are described in the fundamental works of Lapteva (1985) and her followers (Barnet, 1985; Kraevskaya, 2000; Lapteva, 1999).

What are the typical linguistic features of academic discourse? In modern linguistics, this concept is used not only in relation to oral forms of scientific communication, but also in relation to the book-written form of scientific speech, which is considered in terms of culturally specific features of discourse (Clyne, 1987; Khoutyz, 2013, 2015; Mauranen, 1993) In this paper, we will adhere to an understanding of academic discourse as a form of oral public speech.

Academic eloquence (“academic discourse”) as a kind of speech that helps the formation of a scientific worldview, is distinguished by its scientific presentation, clear reasoning and logical structure. This genre includes such genres as a university lecture, a scientific report, a scientific review, a scientific abstract report, a popular science lecture. The linguistic specificity of academic discourse is determined by its belonging to oral public speech as a special functional variety of the Russian language.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the work is to identify specific linguistic and extralinguistic features of oral scientific speech, including its prosodic aspect; to consider topics, situations, genre varieties and linguistic features of oral academic discourse.

5. Research Methods

The research materials are based on transcripts of audio recordings of modern Russian oral scientific speech, processed by auditory analysis and presented in phonetic transcription, reflecting the division of the speech stream using intonational means (pauses, melodies, phrasal accentuation of words). The volume of the analyzed scientific discourse amounted to more than 30 hours of sound. The recordings were made in the most typical situations of functioning of oral scientific speech: at conferences, symposia, scientific seminars, in the classroom. Lecture situations, round-table meetings, and scientific advice were also taken into account. The recorded speech of the main participants of

scientific communication was oral speech, without support or with minimal support of the written text, i.e. speech of scientists and highly qualified specialists.

6. Findings

6.1. Extralinguistic features of oral academic discourse

Oral academic discourse is a speech on the topics of science and on topics of a specialty, many of the specific features of which are determined by the characteristics of the communicative situation of communication, i.e. extralinguistic features, namely: directness, ease, dialogicity/monologicity.

The *directness* is due to the fact that during communication in the audience there is a direct contact of the participants. In this sense, oral scientific speech is similar to colloquial speech and at the same time differs from the forms of communication with the mass addressee in radio broadcasts and television speech.

The *ease* follows from the orientation on the naturalness of communication between the speaker in front of the collective listener and the teacher in the student audience. This attitude is conscious (in colloquial speech it is unconscious), is associated with the need to overcome psychological difficulties in communication. The implementation of this attitude may be hindered, on the one hand, by the official atmosphere of speech (for example, at a conference or symposium), and, on the other hand, poor or insufficient knowledge of the audience. The latter circumstance must be overcome in order to establish easy communication.

The *dialogic / monologous nature* of oral scientific speech is connected with the fact that it can be carried out both in monologue (report, message, speech, lecture genres) and in dialogical form (exam, consultation, talk, discussion). The language functions of communication and the impact on the interlocutor are embodied to a greater extent in speech, which has a dialogical form.

6.2. Situational-thematic conditionality of oral academic discourse

Following the concept of Lapteva (1999), we consider oral public speech as a special area of communication in the framework of the oral-colloquial variety of modern Russian literary language.

The *topic factor*, on the one hand, helps to distinguish between different types of oral public speech and highlight oral academic discourse in it, and on the other hand, combines it with the style of written scientific presentation. To the greatest extent, the effect of the topic factor in oral scientific speech affects the sphere of vocabulary, which determines the thematic focus of the text within a specific subject area of knowledge.

The most important factor affecting the linguistic originality of academic discourse at all levels of its linguistic structure is the *form of speech*. This factor makes it imperative to use oral-speech colloquial means in the academic discourse, which are not random foreign elements in it, but participate, along with general literary and book-writing means, in the formation of a special verbal system of oral scientific speech.

The greatest importance of the *situation factor* in the field of oral scientific speech is found in the selection of language tools. We are talking about the use in the oral scientific text of the means of one or another stylistic affiliation (book-writing, general literary, oral-colloquial) in certain conditions of

communication. For example, the ratio of book-written and expressive-colloquial elements will be different in situations of a report delivered by a circle of specialists, in the situation of an educational lecture intended for students, and in an acute polemical presentation addressed to a wide audience in an oral scientific discussion.

So, the oral form brings oral scientific speech closer to colloquial speech, and the content factor (topic factor), to the corresponding book-written scientific texts. The appeal to a specific audience and the importance of the subject makes academic discourse related to oral public speech. Oral and written forms of speech affect the selection, modification and organization of language tools, as well as the structure and composition of the text.

The written version of the text is logical, concise and clear in the presentation of information, the absence of excessive repetitions and explanations, an impersonal form of presentation, and the uncharacteristic nature of direct calls to the addressee. In contrast, the oral version of the text contains a large number of oral-colloquial elements: direct addresses to listeners, dialogue of speech in the form of question-answer phrases when formulating the problem, pronominal-verb forms indicating the speaker (lecturer), segments of the text containing duplicate information (repetitions, clarifications and explanations).

6.3. Features of the organization of utterance in oral academic discourse

1. Due to segmentation into segments in oral scientific speech, syntactic structures that are not used in written speech may arise. For example, with one substance two verbs formally likened to it can be used; one substantive can be controlled by two verbs, etc. Segments with additional verbs are able to transform the entire structural structure of a statement. Compare: *In practice, we use exclusively // with a fixed comma, we work //.*

2. On the basis of segmentation in oral scientific speech, repetitions that are not characteristic of written scientific speech arise, elliptical or parcel constructions, compare: *Presentation form / of numbers / with fixed point / main / Presentation form / with fixed point //*

3. When segmenting an oral scientific text, various kinds of transformations of the formal and semantic structure of the utterance can be observed, resulting in a syntactic incompleteness of the utterance, impossible in a written scientific speech, for example: *By the way // if you have the opportunity / to find / volume / of Great Soviet Encyclopedia of the second / no / excuse me / not the second / first / edition // which began to be published at the end of the 1920s / and you will take the volume of behaviorism there / that is, the article of behaviorism / the article of behaviorism / in this first publication / just written / by Watson //*

The rules of segmentation characteristic of any genre of oral academic discourse are based on the asymmetry of the semantic-syntactic and intonational plans of utterance, while the syntagmatic division of a written voiced text obeys the law of unity of intonational, syntactic and semantic properties of a minimum speech segment (syntagma). In oral academic discourse, the syntagma may coincide and not coincide with the segment, be larger or smaller than it. Thus, the segment serves not as a categorical, but as a functional construction unit in organizing an oral scientific text.

An example of a segment that is larger than the syntagma and coincides with the proposal (from a

report): *Actually, this is the methodology of science // **what the result will be is another matter** / It will turn out the way / it should be / not what we want //.*

An example of a segment equal to collocation and syntagma (from a lecture): ***In any case** / **everything there is included** / **what is available** // You see what's the matter / everything is very simple / the same is taken / all mathematics is American //.*

An example of a segment smaller than the syntagma (from the opening address at a meeting): *Well / colleagues / we will continue our work // in comparison with the program // **which** / **you have** //.*

A segment is the main structural unit of the organization of expression in oral scientific speech; its boundaries correspond to the volume of the speaker's operating memory during the generation / perception of speech, and therefore, in the practice of teaching professional scientific communication, attention should be paid to the patterns of organization of spontaneous speech flow in situations of academic discourse, corresponding to the norms of oral speech and different from the rules for syntactic construction of a written scientific text.

7. Conclusion

The linguistic features of the structural organization of an oral scientific text are determined by the addressing factor of the sounding speech of a particular audience at a certain time period of the course of the discourse that does not take place when writing scientific information. An oral scientific text (lecture, report, message, speech) is always focused on the optimal delivery of information to a specific recipient and the establishment of contact with him in the process of speech interaction (hence the dialogical nature of the text even characteristic of monologic oral scientific speech). This communicative orientation of academic discourse is expressed by a set of certain linguistic (lexical and syntactic) signals, which in speech play the role of semantic guidelines and facilitate the perception of text by ear.

The difference in language means in the formation of written and oral text is explained by the inclusion of the factor of physical time in the course of oral speech. This factor determines the linear nature of the oral text and the depth of operating memory during its production / reception. The dividing of the speech flow by intonational means into some segments, the progressive nature of the development of the message contribute to the addition of elements of the utterance that were previously absent from the speaker's plan. Such organization of the speech flow reduces the separability of syntactic units in the oral academic discourse, reduces their discreteness. In written form of scientific speech, in which the length of the text does not affect the clarity of its division into separate sentences, this does not happen. Thus, a written scientific text consists of sentences, while oral text consists of statements (analogs of sentences) and segments allocated from the speech chain with a complex of intonational-prosodic means (pauses of various durations, melody, sound intensity).

The principles and methods of research presented in this work can serve as the basis for pragmalinguistic research in other areas of oral communication of modern Russian society.

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