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## Implicit Expression of Negative Evaluative Meaning in the Context of Modern Linguoconflictology (based on the Media Text)

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### Abstract

The authors study linguistic units characterized only by contextually determined semantics of negative connotation, including in the broad context of the situation. It is proved that implicit evaluative statements, for example, using precedent nouns, do not always make the connotation lighter and help to avoid a conflict situation. In the article, based on the modern media sources, using cognitive-pragmatic analysis, the authors study the possibilities of implicit expression of negative evaluative meaning. The mismatch of the two plans of the linguistic sign (meaning/expression) determines the categories of implicitness and explicitness. Implicitness is also due to the absence of isomorphism of denotation and signification. It is possible with implicit components to express information compactly and dynamically, to actualize its rhematic part, and in the case of expressing negative connotative meanings, implicitness helps to observe social prohibitions and prevent conflict communication.

**Keywords:** linguoconflictology, conflictogenic language units, negative evaluation, implicitness, implicit evaluation.

### 1. Introduction

The mismatch of the two plans of a linguistic sign (meaning/expression) determines the implementation of the categories of implicitness and explicitness. At the same time, implicitness is also due to the absence of isomorphism of denotate and significate.

This is precisely a universal feature, and not a feature of some statements or texts, at least because not every thought needs verification (for example, almost always a large premise of inference is reduced in speech, and the information contained in it remains at the level of background knowledge).

It is possible with implicit components to express information compactly and dynamically, to actualize its rhematic part, and in the case of expressing negative evaluative meanings, implicitness helps to observe social prohibitions and prevent conflict communication.

Modern media discourse is conflictogenic, has a tendency to violate communicative, ethical, legal standards of communication in public discourse, to use means of speech aggression and manipulation, in this connection, the issues of linguistic security, communicative ethics, especially in Internet media, are especially urgent (Kačínová, 2019; Kulikova, 2020: 5; Vrabec, Bôtošová, 2020). Therefore, the study of different types of "soft", non-conflict evaluation is extremely relevant.

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Since the time of Sharl' Balli category of evaluation (and much more often – pejorative one) invariably attracts the attention of linguists. It is considered by the researchers to be a reaction to the surrounding world expressed by the word. The stable idea is that implicit evaluation is more positive, milder even in the expression of pejorativeness. However, the article will show that this, correct in whole, position under the influence of communicative conditions and the addressee factor can be changed significantly.

## 2. Materials and methods

In the article, based on the modern media sources, using cognitive-pragmatic analysis, the authors study the possibilities of implicit expression of negative evaluative meaning.

## 3. Discussion

It is a well-known fact, in the language implicitness can be more or less implemented (Baek et al., 2019; Deligiaouri, 2018), that is, these categories are parametrically graded. In this connection, the evaluativeness transmitted by these two ways (with their modifications, transitional, syncretic cases) may contain a different degree of negative expressiveness and, as a consequence, conflictogenicity. Explicit information directly expressed by a linguistic unit with a pejorative meaning is characterized by the highest degree of conflictogenicity. This negative expression reaches its maximum concentration in implementing an invective communicative strategy (Kulikova et al., 2021), when an obscenity is intentionally chosen from a variety of nomination options. For example, the statement of the People's teacher of Russia S. Rukshin: “a pedagogue is not a *whore*, he/she has a high social and state mission, he/she should not sell any services, he/she is a person working in a system-setting institute of society. A teacher who is dependent on the complaints of pupils and their parents will never be an authority. And any transferring values needs the authority of a person presenting them” (Rukshin, 2022: 10).

A lot has been said and written including at the state level that a teacher is not a provider of educational services, that teaching is a mission, not a service. For example, the title of the article “Putin gave an order to remove the concept *educational service* from the legislation” and the text: “The concept *educational service* will be excluded from the Russian legislation on education. This order was given by the President of Russian Federation Vladimir Putin following a meeting of the Presidium of the State Council of the Russian Federation. At the meeting of the Presidium of the State Council on General Education on August 25, Putin proposed not to apply the word “service” directly to the work of teachers” (Goncharuk, 2021: 1).

When discussing the “concept of educational services”, as a rule, comparisons with the work of a seller or a hairdresser used. S. Rukshin (on the pages of the newspaper *Culture!*) uses the offensive invective and thereby sharpens the problem that has not been solved yet. It is a well-known fact that a teacher whose salary depends on the absence of complaints from pupils and their parents remains in the position of a service seller, and it is necessary to change this situation radically.

Hence the choice of a means (Lane, 2020; Tully, Vraga, 2018) for a negative evaluation – not only explicit (assuming the completeness of the manifestation, clarity and emphasized essence of the evaluation), but invective one. The widespread use of punctuations and omissions in invective and obscene expressions is placed in the transitivity zone between implicitness/explicitness.

It is interesting that a similar (in fact) technique can be used in a sounding text, for example: “I wrote the words, we together with the engineer showed them to Andrey, he liked them in whole. But what the engineer did with the obscenity when sounding: instead of the obscene word, either the goat bleated, or people laughed, and the viewer's hearing was not offended. Andrey came up with something like an ellipsis instead of an obscene word” (Bykov, 2019: 55).

We mean the movie by A. Tarkovsky *Andrei Rublev*, in which R. Bykov played the role of the Buffoon and himself wrote ditties for his character, which, obeying laws of the genre, could not do without obscene lexis. Of course, the implicit means of evaluation are the least risky in terms of conflict. If an explicit evaluation (Golan et al., 2019) follows from the very dictionary meaning of a language unit and does not need any transformations, but an implicit negative evaluative information is not expressed openly by a language unit, but it is derived through the interpretation of this unit itself and the context (Jang, Kim, 2018), including the broad context of the situation. The content plan in the implicit evaluation is more meaning-intensive and the recipient is forced to apply some intellectual efforts to detect hidden meanings (Boulianne, 2019). But it is these

expended efforts, according to A.N. Baranov (2011), that make implicit information more effective. Researchers believe it is possible to talk about the "phenomenon of implicit invective".

Thus, according to I.V. Zalozhnaya (Zalozhnaya, 2011) invectivity is considered to be a functional-semantic field, the periphery of which is an implicit invective (for example, such is the definition *fantasy* relating to news programs). The interest in implicit (hidden) invective is connected with the formation of linguo-legal expertise as an applied science at the intersection of language and law.

One of the means for transmitting implicit evaluative meanings are onyms, and "the precedence/non-precedence of an onym affects the volume, essence, and degree of representation of implicit meanings" (Yakovenko, 2013: 5). For example: "And let me smile, looking at how the gallant bearded Kekhman removes the portrait of Eduard Boyakov from the wall. Better late than never. Kekhman is also, you know, not a knight Lancelot, but at least he knows how to do and how not to do with People's Actor of the Soviet Union" (Moskvina, 2021: 19).

The name of the most glorious knight of the era of King Arthur saves the author from direct invectives, which in this context – approval (in general) of the actions of the new administration of the Gorky Moscow Art Theatre – would not be appropriate. *Not a knight Lancelot* is a soft and not definite evaluation: on the one hand, the onym is functionally attractive both in relation to the expressiveness of the text and in relation to the recipient, ensuring his/her participation in the recognition of invective implicatures. For example, a similar case: "The director of the film Igor Ugolnikov personally performs a role in his film, and not a small one, which very few persons have been able to do so far (Chaplin, Shukshin, Mikhalkov), and that Ugolnikov is not Chaplin, he knows himself" (Moskvina, 2022:15).

Often such evaluative onyms, including transformed ones, are placed in a strong heading position. N.A. Bakich points out three reasons for such use of onyms: "firstly, the need to attract the reader's attention, since it is the title that is connected in memory with a familiar phrase or phenomenon; secondly, a better explanation of the meaning; thirdly, the replacement of a direct statement, which may be undesirable in a media source" (Bakich-Samylicheva, 2018: 18).

Implicit evaluativeness (Van Duyn, Collier, 2019) can be realized through a lingual game (pun intended). Journalist Dmitry Popov, commenting on the news that Chubais has left the country, writes: it's just a pity that he *didn't sit down on the track* (authors' note: a pun intended is based on the Russian idiom meaning 'to sit a little before a long trip' and the word 'to sit' meaning 'go to jail') (Popov, 2022: 6);

As the author of the movie put it in a press release, "the original source includes a lot of reasonings that are completely impossible to present in a form of movie". However, the reasonings, as evidenced by the film, is quite *perenosimy* (transferred) to the screen, since its characters are engaged mainly in conversations. Another thing is that not all the viewers will be able to *vynesti* them (a pun intended is based on the verbs *perenesti* and *vynesti* with the same root morpheme) – just as not all the readers were able *vynesti* (to endure) *vitievatyi* (intricate; in Russian the adjective looks like as if it is made from the diminutive form Vitya of the name Victor, but *vitievatyi* in Russian is formed from *vitiya* – predictor) speeches of the book heroes, interspersed with the vampiric concepts of "discourse", "glamour" and "bablo" (dough, jargonism money)" (Matizen, 2022: 28).

Irony belongs to the spectrum of means of expressing implicit negative evaluative meanings (Kulikova, 2020: 203). Irony is a situational implicature, despite the fact that frequency images can become the basis of usual ironisms (for example *Cicero* about a tongue-tied speaker). Irony is considered to be an implicit means of expressing evaluation (Mihailidis, Viotty, 2017; Temmerman et al., 2019; Wenzel, 2019) due to its veiling. Meanwhile, irony, no less than a direct mockery, is able to express both detachment, distancing from the object of irony, a difference, and a dismissive attitude.

For example, the global irony that can be caught literally in every phrase in T. Moskvina's review of the film of I. Ugolnikov *Fruits of Learning*: "Personal passions cannot reverse the initial drama – in the forest (somehow rare and well-visible for the Pskov partisan wilds), partisans ("as well as F. Bondarchuk") sit in eternal and complete readiness, ready to immediately exterminate the enemy. The occupiers are commanded by a fierce major (Michael Epp), believing, unlike Frau Schiller, that "culture has no place in war".

The *Fruits of Learning* are inhabited by clear, simple-minded inhabitants, with obvious and unambiguous reactions. If they have fun – they laugh at the top of their lungs, if they are scared –

they shout or stare, they are angry – they twist their face in a grimace, you can't make a mistake. This is obviously what a viewer with postcovid syndrome needs.

For three series S. Bezrukov was a semi-literate lefty, but in the fourth one his essence was revealed. On the bank of the river, looking into the Pskov wide valleys, he began to recite by heart *Eugene Onegin* to the fascist frau, but he pretended, the tricky devil, that he did not know anything and could not stand Pushkin, the white-handed gentleman, at all. And the stuttering immediately ceased. This was obviously to be an undercover job, an insidious legend that the narrow-minded Frau bought into. In fact, in the Mikhailovskoye, as we guess, a secret agent of Russian culture was acting, who had at last to defeat pompous gentlemen-monsters imagining themselves to be bearers of *prosveshchenie* (in Russian a lingual game is based on *ambiquitas prosveshchenie* – education and enlightenment) in backward peoples. To the Motherland, to Pushkin, as say” (Moskvina, 2022: 15).

Having avoided direct invectives, the author, nevertheless, gave a damning characterization of the new product of “cinematic design”.

#### 4. Results

However, it is impossible to say that techniques such as metaphorization, lingual play, and the use of precedent synonyms always reduce the negative expression of pejorative evaluation. For example:

Headline “Ukrainian Doctor *Mengele*”: “I think he knows that there is international humanitarian law, and therefore he understands that his order is a war crime. And that is why, immediately after it became known that the head of the Russian IC announced the initiation of a criminal case against Druzenko, the “Ukrainian *Mengele*” passed back: he said that he had spoken out of emotion and no one did anything like that. And it is the most important thing, he realized that according to the laws of wartime, nobody would be delicate with him: they would find him and shoot him like a rabid dog. It's good if they don't castrate him beforehand” (Popov, 2022: 2).

The author of the article is a well-known journalist Dmitry Popov, who talks about Ukrainian doctors-sadists. No matter how terrible their crimes are, they are incomparable in scale (but quite comparable from a moral point of view) with the actions of Joseph Mengele, conducted inhumane experiments on prisoners in nazi concentration camps. Thus, the use of the onym maximizes negative evaluation, which has an emotional essence (and not a rational one, in which a logical comparison of the qualities of the nomination objects is carried out). Of course, super-strong negativity is adequately perceived by the reader shares the author's ideological platform. It is a well-known fact, the implicit semantic implicatures of an onym are dynamic, which is determined, in particular, extralinguistically. In Ukraine, where monuments to the Heroes of the Great Patriotic War are being dismantled and accomplices of the nazis are being rehabilitated at the state level, and the name of Doctor Mengele does not look ominous. This example clearly demonstrates how precedent onyms function in the modern media discourse: being correlated with current events of our time, they receive new semantic shades.

For example, also a metaphor that not only does not reduce pejorativeness, but greatly enhances it: “Now Western goods themselves have fled from our counters and markets. And that's great, because for all the convenience and pleasantness, it was a cultural poison that led to the destruction of our identity” (Chesnokov, 2022: 6).

In terms of the dynamics of the evaluative meaning, the word *optimization* is extremely interesting. Wikipedia explains that this is ‘the process of maximizing advantageous characteristics, ratios (for example, optimization of industrial processes and production), and minimizing costs’.

Form deprived from Latin *optimum* is ‘the best’, this word is able to express positive pragmatics (for example the optimization of speech communication, etc.) But everybody knows what the reform in medicine, launched in 2010, which was called the *optimization of healthcare*, turned out for the population; the same was with the *optimization* of industry, education and culture.

Neologisms such as *optimized*, *optimizers* with bright pejorative pragmatics appeared in the Russian language. And that is why the original meliorative looks scary in such a newspaper headline: *Optimization of invalids*.

Subtitle: In Rostov Region, people with disabilities were deprived of free travel in public transport (Kolobova, 2022: 3). In the article we read: “The Russian citizens usually shudder at the word optimization. Because they remember how, for example, the healthcare system was optimized: and it wasn't very ..., but what became... Recently, the Ministry of Labour of Rostov Region applied this wonderful word to the most defenceless: invalids, including children”.



The article contains the text with which the government of Rostov Region responded to the outrage of people: “Taking into consideration establishing the unified form for providing social support measures to preferential categories of citizens in Rostov Region (the introduction of a one-time monthly cash payment in the amount of 1000 rubles for regional beneficiaries) fare from 01.04.2022 for federal beneficiaries has been *optimized*”. The word *optimization* especially angered the people: Who optimized? whom and where? – to parents of children-invalids, invalids and invalid children, it is clear, in whole ... As we can see, native meliorative Latinism has become extremely conflictogenic due to got negative evaluation.

## 5. Conclusion

The phenomenological essence of a natural language consists in the asymmetry of the signifier and the signified, generating implicitness. The flexibility of a linguistic sign, the variability of its semantic valence and connotations provide variability in expressing of negative evaluative meanings.

Negative-evaluative information can be expressed with varying degrees of intensity. Implicitness is rightly recognized as the least risky way of evaluation in media communication, since it is able to smooth out negative evaluation and thereby reduce the conflictogenicity of the text. At the same time, as it has been shown, traditional means of implicit expression of negative evaluation can, under certain conditions, be not weaker, but stronger in terms of the degree of emotional expressiveness, in terms of the effect on the recipient.

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