

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2020.21.1.18>**ФУНКЦИИ ДИСКУРСИВНОЙ ЕДИНИЦЫ "ДА ИЛИ НЕТ?" В РЕЧИ ВЛЮБЛЕННОГО (НА МАТЕРИАЛЕ ПРОИЗВЕДЕНИЙ А. П. ЧЕХОВА)**

Научная статья

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Аннотация

Статья посвящена анализу функций высказывания "Да или нет?" в речи влюбленного в произведениях А. П. Чехова. Анализ проводится на материале фрагментов произведений А. П. Чехова: "И то и сё" (1881), "Знамение времени" (1883-84), "Медведь" (1888), "Предложение" (1888), "Иванов" (1887). Выявлено, что дискурсивная единица "Да или нет?" обладает рядом функций для автора-повествователя и рядом прагматических функций для субъекта ситуации объяснения в любви. Для автора-повествователя этими функциями являются: функция маркирования дискурса "объяснения в любви", функция маркирования тональности повествования, функция маркирования пересечения ситуации объяснения в любви с ситуацией предложения замужества. Для субъекта ситуации это функция передачи права говорить, функция хезитации, функция концептуальной значимости.

Ключевые слова: дискурсивные единицы, дискурсивные маркеры, прагматы, функции дискурсивных единиц, дискурс любви, дискурс объяснения в любви, А. П. Чехов.

FUNCTIONS OF THE DISCURSIVE UNIT "YES OR NO?" IN THE SPEECH OF LOVER (BASED ON THE WORKS OF A. P. CHEKHOV)

Research article

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the analysis of the functions of the statement "Yes or no?" in the speech of lover in the works of A. P. Chekhov. The analysis is based on fragments of works by A. P. Chekhov: "This and That: Four Vignettes" (1881), "A Sign of the Times" (1883-84), "The Bear" (1888), "A Marriage Proposal" (1888), "Ivanov" (1887). It is revealed that the discursive unit "Yes or no?" has a number of functions for the author-narrator and a number of pragmatic functions for the subject of the situation of declaration of love. For the author-narrator these functions are: the function of marking the "declaration of love" discourse, the function of marking the tonality of the narrative, the function of marking the intersection of the situation of declaration of love with the situation of marriage proposal. For the subject of the situation, these are function transfer of rights to speak, function of hesitation, function of conceptual significance.

Keywords: discursive units, discursive markers, pragmatems, functions of discursive units, discourse of love, declaration of love discourse, A. P. Chekhov.

Introduction

Discursive units (hereinafter — DU) are a relatively new concept in linguistics. The first research in this area appeared in the 1970s due to the increased interest in the functioning of spontaneous oral speech and its manifestations. Linguists (Y. V. Daragan, E. A. Zemskaya, O. B. Sirotinina, etc.) attempted to describe and classify this phenomenon. In modern linguistic literature, there is no consensus about the functions of DU and their classification. According to E. V. Nikolaeva, it occurs in connection with "their lexical abstractness, grammatical multidimensionality and communicative multi-functionality" [1, P. 123]. It is difficult to define the rigid boundaries for the meaning of grammatical, lexical-semantic and syntactic paradigms of DU. The traditional terminological system of grammar in written Russian cannot cope with the huge number of pragmatic meanings of DU, which actualized in speech. As a result, DU are designated as particles, conjunctions, introductory words, interjections, cliched utterances, etc., which are interpreted differently: «non-indicative vocabulary», «extra words» [2, P. 71-73], «empty particles» [3, P. 36], «parasite words» [4, 2002], «discursive words» [5, P. 7], «discursive units» [6]. No clear terminological uniformity can also be found in foreign literature. This phenomenon is considered in various aspects and is designated as «discourse connections» [7, P. 136-142], «pragmatic connections» [8, P. 447], «semantic conjuncts» [9], etc. The most commonly used term is «discourse markers» (DMs), the development of which is discussed in detail in the research work «What are discourse markers?» by B. Fraser [10, P. 931-952]. As seen, there is a very extensive terminology palette for this language phenomenon. However, in the works devoted to the problem of DU, it is possible to distinguish functions that are noted by most researchers. The function of pragmatic semantic connection between parts of a statement [8, P. 447-456] and the function of marking discourse [10, P. 931-952], the function of highlighting significant parts of the speech process [11], the function of hesitation [6]. Our paper is dedicated to identification and analyzes the functions of the DU "Yes or no?" both for the author-narrator and for the subject of the declaration of love situation in the speech of Chekhov's characters.

Discursive unit "Yes or no?"

The choice of the term DU is motivated by the desire for a common terminology. The studied DU "Yes or no?" is an alternative issue on the formal side. It cannot be designated as a "discursive word" or "discursive marker" (within the meaning of B. Fraser) [10], because it is at a higher stage of the language structure. We do not intend to introduce a new term to describe already known phenomenon, but guided by the works of N. V. Bogdanova on creating a dictionary of the Russian

language. Distinctive feature of this dictionary from other publications (pl. refer to «Guide-book of Russian discursive words» [11], «Discursive words of the Russian language: experience of contextual and semantic description» [12], «Dictionary of Russian particles» [13], «Defining dictionary of auxiliary parts of speech in Russian language» [14]) is the use of materials of oral and audio subcorpora of Russian National Corpus (hereinafter referred to as RNC).

N. V. Bogdanova writes that "one of the striking features of speech in conditions of temporary deficit are whole hesitation constructions that can be systematized in terms of the functions performed by them <...> Such hesitation constructions are called <...> discursive units" [6, P.3]. In addition, N. V. Bogdanova points out that not only individual lexemes, but also whole constructions in some cases «pass to the communicative and pragmatic level of the language and become purely pragmatic units that express different speaker's reactions to the surrounding reality» [15, P.10]. The term DU is more comprehensive in relation to the "Yes or no?" in the speech of Chekhov's lovers.

Research material

Appeal to the literary Chekhov's texts is due to the fact that "Chekhov's dialogue is realistic. There is a live speech in it" [16]. It should be recognized that the interpreter's intonation always prevails in a literary text. However, this interpretation is based not only on personal experience, but also on the direct author's remark (in drama) or indirect indications of the speaker's state (in fictional text). A. P. Chekhov «extremely skillfully uses intonations < ... > of speech» [17], «the manner of pronouncing certain words often reveals <...> the essence of the acting Chekhov's characters» [17]. This indicates the great affinity of Chekhov's dialogues to native speech.

Research study was performed on the material of five text fragments from the humorous stories "This and That: Four Vignettes" (1881), "A Sign of the Times" (1883-84), dramatic jokes in one act "The Bear" (1888), "A Marriage Proposal" (1888) and drama "Ivanov" (1887). Text fragments from these works are utterance statement of the subject of the declaration of love situation about his feelings to the object of love. In semantic terms, whole utterance statement are close to the subject's statement "I love You/you". However, there may be no textual representation of the invariant of this speech formula. DU "Yes or no?" is an integral part of a whole utterance statement about love. In most cases, it can be found at the end of the lover's speech.

1. "I love you!" he continues ... — *Seeing you for the first time, I understood what I live for, I learned the purpose of my life! Life with you — or absolute non-existence! My dear! Marya Ivanovna! Yes or no? Manya! Marya Ivanovna... I Love you... Manechka... Answer me, or I will die! Yes or no?* " [18, Vol. 1, P. 103]

2. "I can't live without you, my dear! I swear!" he gasped. "Since I saw you, I have lost my peace! My dear, tell me... say... *Yes or no?*" [19, Vol. 2, P. 262]

3. Smirnov: "Mad, about love, like a boy, like a fool! (He grabs her hand, and she screams in pain.) *I love you! (Kneels down.) I love you as I have never loved! I have left twelve women, and nine have left me, but I have never loved any of them as I love you... Got angry, hurried, and broke down... I am on my knees like a fool, and offer a hand... Shame on me! I didn't fall in love for five years, I swear off to myself, and then I fell in love...! I offer my hand. Yes or no? You don't want to? It is not necessary!* (He gets up and goes quickly to the door)" [20, Vol. 11, P. 310]

4. Natalia Stepanovna: "Dad, tell me honestly, in good faith: what is the better dog, our *Otkataj* or his *Ugadaj?*"

Lomov: "Stepan Stepanovich, I beg of you, tell me only one thing: is your *Otkataj* having the lower jaw slightly shorter than the upper jaw? *Yes or no?*" [20, Vol. 11, P. 328]

5. Borkin (seriously): "Enough. Let's talk about business. Let's talk directly, in a commercial way. Answer me directly, without subtleties and without any tricks: *Yes or no? Listen up!* (Points to the Count.) *Here he needs money, at least three thousand a year's income. You need a husband. Do you want to be a Countess?*" [20, Vol. 11, P. 251]

Fragment 4 was selected due to the fact that in the writer's work the situation of declaration of love often includes a proposal of marriage or accompanies it (for more information pl. refer to Eleston-Biron A.V. Declaration of love as a speech genre (based on the material of early stories by A.P. Chekhov) [21]). A.P. Chekhov entitled this dramatic work «A Marriage Proposal (a joke in one act)» [20, Vol.11, P. 313]. In terms of meaning, the entire text of this work is declaration of love and a marriage proposal, despite the fact that the participants most of the time talk about something completely different. In this text fragment, the semantics of "Yes or no?" is close to the meaning of the subject's question "Do you accept marriage proposal or not?" Similar contiguity of different situations is observed in text fragment 5.

Functions of DU "Yes or no?" in mentioned fragments are as follows:

Functions for the author-narrator

Marking the "declaration of love" discourse

T. A. van Dijk considers "the concept of discourse is as vague as the concepts of language, society, ideology" [22, P. 215]. Nevertheless, the researcher gives his vision of discourse as «a communicative event that occurs between the speaker and the listener (observer, etc.) in the process of communicative action in a certain time, space, and other context. This communicative action can be verbal, written, have verbal and non-verbal components» [22, P. 215]. An important point is also to separate the understanding of discourse as text from the understanding of discourse as speech. T. A. van Dijk considers discourse as «a concept concerning actual speech action, whereas 'text' is a concept concerning the system of language. The text is an abstract theoretical construct that is implemented in discourse» [22, P. 215].

According to N. D. Arutyunova, "one side of the discourse is addressed to the pragmatic situation, which is used to determine the coherence of the discourse, its communicative adequacy, to clarify its implications and presuppositions, to interpret it <...> The other side of the discourse is addressed to the mental processes of communication participants: ethnographic, psychological and socio-cultural rules and strategies for generating and understanding speech in certain conditions (discourse processing), which determine the necessary pace of speech, the degree of its coherence, the ratio of the general and specific, new and common, subjective and generally accepted, explicit and implicit content of discourse, the measure of its spontaneity, the choice of means to achieve the goal, fixing the point of view of the speaker, etc." [23].

As for the specific "declaration of love" discourse, R. Barth considered love discourse as the deployment of the lover's speech: "someone speaks about himself (lovingly) in front of the other (beloved), who does not speak" [24].

Based on the mentioned above definitions, applying them to the works of A.P. Chekhov, we understand by the term "declaration of love discourse" a logically complete fragment of text, representing in the form of a monologue (dialogue, polylogue) the situation of declaration of love with a companion author's description of the conditions of its occurrence, relevant for understanding of the whole piece of writing.

In the given text fragments DU "Yes or no?" is an integral part of the subject's direct statement about his (or someone else's —text fragment 5) feeling of love. In turn, the whole statement is part of the declaration of love situation, described by the author. It can be seen by referring to broader contexts. Therefore, DU "Yes or no?" connects a certain type of discourse in the works of A.P. Chekhov. It is a high-frequency element when the author transmits the speech of a lover (subject) in a situation of declaration of love. In addition, the conversation of the participants in the situation is within the author's narrative, indicating the conditions, the physical and mental state of the communicants. Note that the occurrence of the DU "Yes or no?" in "declaration of love" discourse we have recorded in literary texts belonging to various literary genres. The first two text fragments belong to the genre of short humorous stories written by the author at the beginning of his literary activity. The next three are dramatic texts, belonging to the period of early Chekhov's plays (before 1888). The paradigmatic connection of situations declaration of love is shown not only in relation to the genre, but also in the tonality of prose and dramatic forms. Both in the early stories and in the early plays, the author's irony is heard in relation to the characters. Text fragments 3 and 4 are anecdotal situations of declaration of love. The similarity is also found in the brevity of the forms of prose humor and dramatic jokes (as the author himself titled them). These jokes keep within a single act.

Additional proof that DU "Yes or no?" marks the "declaration of love" discourse in the work of the writer of different periods is the result of our study in the RNC. Used as a marker, DU "Yes or no?" revealed in co-variation of literary works of A. P. Chekhov in RNC (280 documents, 810 581 words in total) has four fragments directly relating to the "declaration of love" discourse or a love discourse in general. These fragments belong to the story "The Man in the Case" (1898), the play "Fatherless" (1878), "Uncle Vanya" (1897) and "Cherry orchard" (1904). The interpretation of these text fragments requires separate consideration and is beyond the scope of this article.

Marking the tonality of narration

The tonality of narration of short stories and dramatic sketches is similar. The subjects' speech is often pathetic. At the same time, there is a certain development of the author's attitude to the situation. In broader contexts, it can be seen that in stories A.P. Chekhov is only slightly ironic about the described explanation of love. In the dramatic form, the funny side of the situation increases. It is displayed in the fact that in prose, the subject of declaration of love retains the direction of their thoughts and selects appropriate speech tactics: utters compliments (*Seeing you for the first time, I realized what I live for*), swears loyalty (*I Swear to you!*), speaks of the importance of his feelings (*I can't live without you*). The subject of the situation, presented in dramatic form, is in a state of extreme emotional excitement. This allows the author organically include in the subject's speech a topic that does not correspond to the situation at all. A. D. Stepanov, exploring the problems of communication in works by A. P. Chekhov calls this technique "a strategy for mixing and transforming speech genres" [25], and considers it as one of the main generating mechanisms of the Chekhov's text. In text fragment 4, the character completely forgets the purpose of his speech, and his "Yes or no?" question formally refers to a dispute about the merits of hunting dogs (*<...> tell me only one thing: is your Otkataj having the lower jaw slightly shorter than the upper jaw? Yes or no?*). However, the answer depends on whether he marries or not. In text fragment 3, the subject's mental tension and confusion reaches such a level that he accepts a duel offer from the object of his love (a young widow). The right of the first shot he gives to the woman and is ready to die by her hand: *"Shoot! You can't understand what a happiness is to die under the gaze of those wonderful eyes, to die by the revolver held by that little velvet hand..."* [20, Vol. 11, P. 310].

Marking of situations overlap

DU "Yes or no?" belongs (in four text fragments out of 5) to the speech of those characters for whom the feeling of love is directly related to the proposal of marriage. These declarations, despite the emotional arousal of speech subjects, are more rational. The explainer does not pay compliments, does not swear of loyalty. On the contrary, he can even say that can be interpreted as a negative argument by the object (*Twelve women I abandoned, nine abandoned me*). He does not describe his feeling in elevate tones. In speech, the subject uses stylistically reduced metaphors (*fell in love, like a "shaft" in someone else's body*) or even indirectly determines their attitude to the future marriage at the level of the lexemes used (*Damn it, is it possible to arrange this abomination for yourself?*) [20 Vol. 11, P. 251]. In this "prosaic" declaration of love, there is a third person who performs various functions. The third communicant can either distract the speaker (*Lily, for a minute! — said the brother*) [19, Vol. 2, P. 262], or called to help him (*If the Count wants, he can*) [20, Vol. 11, P. 251]. This help can be expressed in various ways: from just giving a glass of water (*<...>Shouts. Man, water!*) [20, Vol. 11, 310], to cynical matchmaking (*Well, well, do not overshadow! It's commercial case*) [20, Vol. 11, P. 251]. In text fragment 5, the repeated question "Yes or no?" does not belong to the courting lover, but to his friend, who treats the situation of declaration of love and marriage proposal very pragmatically.

Functions for the subject of the declaration of love situation

The transfer of rights to speak

In all five text fragments, the studied DU "Yes or no?" has the semantic position of the result of the preceding speech. "Yes or no?" is a discursive marker of the end of the speech declaration in love. Before, the subject expresses all possible arguments in order to achieve a positive response to the declaration. Having exhausted his eloquence, being in a state of nervous excitement and lack of time, he searches for help from another participant of communication. DU "Yes or no?" function becomes the transferring of right to speak to the object of love. At the same time, the DU "Yes or no?" serves as a request/imperative register:

- in the case when the subject is more focused on achieving a response (love), the intonation of his speech is softer, corresponds to a request or even a plea (*I beg you*). Replicas of the subject are long, smooth and rhythmic, using verbal participle phrases. The explanation is supported by accompanying compliments and expressions of admiration for the object of love (*Seeing you for the first time, I realized why I live / When I saw you, I lost my peace*). DU "Yes or no?" in this case, is in the absolute final of the utterance. Before it, the subject had already uttered the words of a declaration of love (*I love you! / I can't live without you / I love you!*) and thus expressed the main idea of his explanation. He has nothing more to say, and he is waiting for an answer. He is fairly open. He waits for a decision and asks another participant to speak;

- the imperative component is stronger when the subject is more focused on getting consent to marry. The intonation becomes more rhythmic, which is expressed by the syntactic and punctuation construction of statements (*Went mad, fell in love, like a boy, like a fool / Answer me directly, without subtleties and without any tricks*). The explainer treats the situation more rationally, despite his feeling of love (*I Love as I have never loved!*) he no longer pays compliments. DU "Yes or no?" changes its position in the composition of the entire utterance. It shifts and is no longer in the absolute finale of the speaker's speech. (*I offer my hand. Yes or no? You don't want to? It is not necessary!*) The speaker's tone changes from pleading to demanding. This allows the subject to maintain their dignity. In case of a possible refusal, he considers himself insulted and immediately changes his behavior tactics (*Yes or no? We have no time...*) [20, Vol. 11, P. 251]. The subject of the situation of declaration of love becomes not a petitioner, but a giver of his love as a favor (*Do you want to be a Countess?*) [20, Vol. 11, P. 251].

Hesitation

N. V. Bogdanova considers the function of hesitation as a universal function of DU. "These units are appropriately called also *verbal hesitative*. In the flow of speech, they are used either independently, or arranged in more or less extended hesitation constructions" [15, P. 11]. DU "Yes or no?" in the speech of the one who declares of love, it becomes a verbalization of hesitation. Uttered after the words of declaration (expressed differently), it is intended to fill a gap in the speaker's speech flow. This is because DU "Yes or no?" is the semantic finale not only of the utterance, but also of the communicative message. The communicative goal of the subject is not only to speak out, to declare love, but also to get a response to their declaration (positive or negative). The response of the object of love determines the further emotional disposition of the subject to it. A lacunae, verbalized in DU "Yes or no?" gives the subject time to anticipate further developments based on external, non-speech signs. If the subject's assumptions are negative (or the object of love hesitates), the pause gives time to search for new words to develop the explanation. However, the speaker, in view of the dichotomous "Yes or no?" drives itself into a communication trap. He does not want to think about rejection, but he also does not have the resources (temporary, psychological and verbal) for a new heartfelt declaration of love, which would be more effective than the previous one. As a result, the subject makes inertial speech repetitions (*Yes or no? Many! Marya Ivanovna... Love... Manechka... Answer me, or I will die! Yes or no?*). Such "doubles" hold the attention from the position of the listener, focus the object of the declaration of love on making a decision, on the need to give a clear answer as soon as possible. From the speaker's position, repetitions become unconscious hypnosis. The requirement to make a decision immediately is important here. As a result, after series of repetitions of DU "Yes or no?" partially loses solid semantic meaning for the listener. The object of the declaration comes under sound hypnotization by the speaker. Phonetically explosive and short "Yes" prosodically brighter than the subsequent "No". "Yes" has structurally stronger position, and repeated several times with semantic emphasis, inclines the object of love to a positive response.

Conceptual significance of "Yes or no?"

R. Barth notes that the lover, speaking about his feeling in the face of Another "all the time puts the same question (will they love me?), and this question is an alternative: all or nothing" [24]. In the text fragments given above, DU "Yes or no?" acts as an important link for the subject of the declaration of love with his understanding of happiness/unhappiness in life. One of the main reasons for excitement at the moment of speech, confusion, and general emotional instability is the fear of possible rejection. Putting before the object of declaration of love the need to give an unambiguous short answer to the question "Yes or no?" the explainer raises the question of his life and death (*Life with you — or absolute non-existence! / I can't live without you, my dear! I swear it!*). In prose form, when irony prevails in the author's narrative, this dilemma can only be perceived as a metaphor. However, in dramatic versions, the semantic component of the inability to live is amplified and verbalized (Smirnov: "*Shoot!*") [20, Vol. 11, P. 310]. In text fragment 4, where we are talking about seemingly completely abstract things, the subject begs (*I beg*) to give him a positive answer, because he is in a state of heart attack (this follows from the broader context). He can be saved only by the acceptance of the other participants in the situation that his dog is better than a dog, belonging to the object of his love (*I beg of you, tell me only one thing: is your Otkataj having the lower jaw slightly shorter than the upper jaw? Yes or no?*). It is on this further proposal of marriage, and therefore his life, depends. The most striking example of this boundary between life and death is the Declaration of love (text fragment 3), which occurs during a duel between the subject and the object of the situation. In a broader context: "Popova (indignant, shakes the revolver): "*Shoot! To the barrier!*" [20, Vol. 11, P. 310]. Summing up what has been said, DU "Yes or no?" acquires a complex (multi-component) lexically expressed cognitive-conceptual significance in the speech of the subject of declaration of love, reflecting the perception of personal happiness.

Conclusion

Alternative question "Yes or no?", which belongs to the speech of the subject in the situation of declaration of love, has a number of functions for both the author-narrator and the enamored subject of the situation. These functions become visible with close look at declaration of love situation, which reveals pragmatic meanings for "Yes or no?". Meaningful as a DU question "Yes or no?" shows that its role is not just to get information from the object of love and to get a response. Functions of DU "Yes or no?" in the speech of the lover in the works of A.P. Chekhov are diverse. In particular, each individual use of DU "Yes or no?" clarifies and supplements the possible list of functions. The analysis of text fragments revealed the function of marking the "declaration of love" discourse, the function of marking the tonality of the narrative, the function of marking the intersection of the situation of declaration of love with the situation of marriage proposal, function of transfer of rights to

speak, function of hesitation, function of conceptual significance. DU "Yes or no?" is a multifunctional language phenomenon in the works of A.P. Chekhov. Grammatical, lexical-semantic, syntactic, communicative and discursive features of the "Yes or no?" become visible only in the comparison of contexts containing this DU. Clarifying the values and functions of DU "Yes or no?" is possible in the analysis of other text fragments of works by Anton Chekhov.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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