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DISCOURSE MARKER IN MASS MEDIA TEXTS

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Abstract

It was revealed in the course of the study that discursive markers are the essential mechanism for achieving the goals that a journalist a priori set for themselves, starting to create the text of an analytical report. These markers appear as components of a stable communication system, which is modeled in the text of the analytical report to reflect the event perspective implicitly, the point of view in relation to this perspective and the personal attitude to it. The journalist projects an organizational plan for the pragmatic structure of the analytical report based on discursive markers, the relationship between the propositions that form the text, and the subjective assessment embedded in the semantic content of this text. The reader interprets the text in accordance with those communicative intentions that are relevant to the journalist by decoding implicit information contained in discursive markers. Thus, discursive markers are analyzed in our publication as key (mandatory) components of generating and interpreting the text of the analytical report. Discursive markers, acting as components of the structure of journalistic assessment, form a modal frame of reporting judgment - the person initiating the assessment, and the objects being evaluated, evaluative elements, stereotypes and scales - are designed to be perceived in the immediate context of those representations that are relevant to modern society.

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1. Introduction

In this publication, research focuses on the pragmatic problems of the functioning of discursive markers that project interpersonal relationships between participants and objects of the current communicative situation, i.e. journalist, reader and text of analytical reporting. According to our observations, such markers belong to one of the most frequent interactive tools in the texts of Russian-language analytical reports. The repertoire of these markers is formed by lexemes that belong to different grammatical classes, are involved in the position, as a rule, of the absolute beginning of a statement (judgment) expressing a journalistic opinion regarding the discussed socio-political issues (com. *no doubt / certainly, of course / obviously*).

The markers we analyze not only act as a means of cohesion between the joining fragments of the text of the report, but also largely determine the communicative perspective of the reader's interpretation of a complete journalistic work.

In our research, the text of the analytical report is analyzed as such a communicative (interactive) event, in the context of which the actual author's meaning is generated and interpreted based on certain discursive markers. Any text fully implements the author's intentions, if the addressee is able (possesses the appropriate competence) to recognize these intentions and make their optimal interpretation. In this regard, we primarily use a semantic-pragmatic approach in our research to describing the form and functions of discursive markers, which, in turn, appear not only as a means of creating a coherent and holistic text of the report, but also as a constructive mechanism for communicating an implicit semantic content to the reader revealing the specifics of the author's subjective vision of socio-political reality and personal attitude to this reality.

We define discursive markers as such language indicators, the primary function of which is to model the relationship of connectivity and the integrity of the text work. These relations are formed between overlapping text segments, one or another aspect of the illuminated socio-political situation, which, in turn, creates a pragmatic basis for the interpersonal relationship between the author and the reader and, ultimately, sets the communicative prospects of the reader's interpretation of the text work.

2. Problem Statement

Despite the fact that discursive markers as a text phenomenon in multinational linguistics receive a multifaceted study (Bolden, 2016; Crible, 2017; Fraser, 2015), there is still no unanimity among researchers in terms of highlighting the issue that is associated with their immediate terminological and semantic definition. In current linguistic studies, the text order phenomenon we are considering is nominated as "discursive particles" (Katsman, 2017), "discursive (pragmatic) signals" (Vinogradova, 2011), "discursive connectors or operators" (Celle, & Huart, 2007; Unger, 1996), etc.

In our research, we, following (Maschler, & Schiffrin, 2015), defend the usefulness of the term "discursive markers" because it consistently reflects the essential characteristics of the relationship of coherence and integrity in the text of the report, as well as the semantic content of language indicators, providing these relationships. On the one hand, the component of the term "discursive" systematically reflects the fact that the tools we are exploring operate at the "beyond-sentence" level and are determined

by the discourse of the journalist's personality. On the other hand, the component of the term "marker" in its content turns out to be broader than, in particular, the terms "particle" or "connector", it implies a wider range of pragmatic functions performed by the indicated means in the text of the report. We believe that the term "marker" sheds light not only on the semantic relationships between text sequences within the near and far context, but also the communicative intentions of the author of the text to produce implicit meaning, the discursive relationship between the author and the reader of the report.

The phenomenon we are studying receives the most diverse semantic definitions, depending on the methodological approach used, the type of the studied (monological / dialogical) text, the repertoire of language tools that implement the given pragmatic load, and the methods for analyzing these tools and their functions (Schourup, 1999).

We have recorded only two studies that analyze the problems of the interaction of the language indicators we are considering and the media in the linguistics of the Russian-language text, despite the widespread use of discursive markers in Russian-language analytical reporting, their key role in the holistic organization, generation and interpretation of the semantic content of reporting statements. At the same time, irrespective of the text of the analytical report, specific questions of "subjective reliability" of markers in reality / in fact (Isachenko, 2012), "epistemic vigilance" as a phenomenon realized by these markers in comparative material of English and Russian languages (Klepikova & Klepikova, 2014) get into the focus of the linguists' research attention (2014). In contrast to the indicated surveys, a different repertoire of discursive markers is analyzed within the framework of our work. These markers are interpreted as means of implicit manifestation of the author's meaning and programming the reader's perception of the text of the analytical report, i.e. strictly defined mass media genre.

In modern studies of the language and communication styles of relevant information, analytical reporting is considered as a phenomenon of journalistic order, which is formed in some discursive contexts with the inevitable possibility of its perception and awareness in a different context (Baran & Davis, 2014; Fairclough, 1992; Spitulnik, 1996). Journalistic discourses systematically reflected in analytical reports are analyzed by linguists not so much as a product of professional activity, but as a creative process (Manovich, 2014; McQuail & Windahl, 2015). Both modern concepts of the text and the specifics of the social environment in which text works are implemented are analyzed in detail for the purpose of a multidimensional study of analytical reporting (Moores, 2005). The text appears as an immanent part of discursive processes, and therefore the problems of text and discourse are studied in parallel, in close connection with each other (Gavrilova, 2015). The text of the analytical report is a product of the initiator of the actual semantic content, a constructive resource for the readership as the target interpreter of this content at a more general consideration.

3. Research Questions

The pragmatic goal of the texts under study is to exert a certain influence on the reader's interpretation of current facts and events, and therefore they are characterized by an implicitly expressed personal attitude towards recreated events. The argumentative and subjective-evaluative nature of the texts of analytical reports suggests the frequency use of discursive markers; *moreover, of course, I think*. Our observations indicate that it is these markers that construct the author's arguments and implicitly express

the journalist's point of view on the facts and phenomena of socio-political reality. The markers studied by us are frequently used in the texts of analytical reports. As a result, the texts of such reports are interpreted by us as factual material, which plays a constructive role in the semantic and pragmatic analysis of the functional load of discursive markers

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze systematically the functional load of discursive markers at two levels of the text structure of the analytical report, namely in the context of a single statement and a complete text fragment. It seems that the realization of such a goal makes it possible to trace the pragmatic role played by discursive markers in the process of generating and interpreting the text of the analytical report in Russian. We can say that the study of the functional load of discursive markers in the text of the analytical report also acquires important methodological significance, since it makes it possible to determine the range of professional competencies of the journalist required for a coherent and holistic representation of the text of the analytical report, encoding of implicit meaning in this text.

5. Research Methods

The illustrative material analyzed in our work includes one hundred contexts of using discursive markers without a doubt / certainly, of course / obviously, extracted by continuous sampling from analytical reports. The texts we analyzed were published in the weekly journal *Russian Reporter* No. 25–52 July – December 2018. This periodical was chosen by us because of its special popularity among the readership and comprehensive coverage of social and political events. The starting point of a pragmatic study of discursive markers in the framework of our work is the idea that the text of the analytical report is a communicative event that is generated by the author and interpreted by the reader on an interactive basis. This text, being a hierarchically structured work of journalistic creativity, involves segmentation, which is based on functional relationships between text components, systematically reflecting the author's pragmatic intentions and illocutionary goals.

At the first stage of the analysis, we segment the texts we are studying in order to trace the boundaries of the reporting statement in which the discursive marker is activated. We focus our attention on such levels of the structure of the text of the analytical report as a single statement and that text fragment that makes up the context for this statement as a result of this. The second stage of the analysis describes the semantic-pragmatic relationships that underlie the coherence of text fragments. At the third stage of the analysis, discursive markers are distinguished on the one hand, at the beginning of a statement and, on the other hand, at the beginning of a text fragment. In both cases, discursive markers incorporate deep semantic content, embedded either in a single utterance or in an autonomous fragment of the text. The description of the context in which the discursive marker is used sheds light on the specifics of marker functioning in this context.

6. Findings

The variety of discursive markers that we are analyzing clarifies the estimated content implicitly manifested by the reporting statement, while the journalistic assessment is superimposed on the propositional value conveyed by this statement. The estimated content realized by these markers is interpreted in our study as the pragmatic effect that they have on the propositional value of the reporting statement. Com. (1):

We walk past the yards. And finally, we go out to the garages, behind which there is a small patch for laundry - behind a high fence and wire. Ideally, it will work here from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and at night, employees will wash clothes that Muscovites will no doubt donate to the homeless (Solovieva, 2018, p.24).

A discursive marker *no doubt* (1) enables the reader to trace the journalist's personal attitude to the propositional content of the reportage. The pragmatic purpose of this expression is to implicitly present the author's subjective commentary on that objective fact, which is made public in the proposition of the utterance. In particular, the journalist expresses a strong degree of confidence that the propositional content of the statement is true, will become one in the near future. Based on this pragmatic content, the discursive marker activated in the text fragment (1) performs two constructive functions:

1. reflects the personal attitude of the journalist to an objective fact that makes up the proposition of the reportage;
2. fixes the nature of the relationship that is established between the journalist and the text generated by them.

The reader enters into dialogical contact with the author of the text and gets the opportunity to initiate a positive or negative reaction to the initial stimulus by decoding these functions of the discursive marker. In the process of expressing a reactive message, the addressee establishes an interpersonal relationship with the journalist. By revealing the author's attitude to the reported objective fact, the reader fixes the orientation of the discursive marker on the psychological personality of the journalist, since this marker implements the subjective assessment manifested by the creator of the text to the social realities that are reflected in the report.

The discursive marker *no doubt* constructs the relationship between the journalist and the proposition implemented in the reportage statement by implicitly instructing the reader how the journalist himself interprets this proposition. It seems that we can say that this marker implicitly manifests a subjective assessment of the content of the reporting statement, a personal attitude to this content, which belongs to the journalist.

Our observations indicate that the entire repertoire of the markers we study has a similar functional load, which express a strong degree of confidence of the journalist that the proposition that is made public in the reportage is true. Statistical analysis of the discursive markers we are studying is presented in the Table 01.

Table 1. Statistical analysis of discursive markers projecting interpersonal relations between journalist and reader in the text of an analytical report (source - Russian Reporter magazine, July-December, 2018)

Discursive marker	The number of uses in the text
no doubt	31
certainly	28
of course	21
obviously	20

The discursive markers presented in Table 1 reveal a relatively similar frequency of use in the text of the analytical report (based on a hundred contexts selected by the continuous sampling method). Their basic pragmatic purpose is to manifest implicitly a journalistic assessment of the content of the statements they introduce. The author of the reportage text indicates to the reader (the target readership) how they initially interpret the current social or political phenomenon, based on a personal point of view based on these language expressions.

Discursive markers, to one degree or another, also realize a text function, since they act as a means of linking the previous fragment of the report and the current author's judgment, embodying the original thesis and its personal assessment. We believe that in this regard, all analyzed markers can be considered as complete doublets, i.e. synonymous expressions that implement a similar pragmatic load in the text of the analytical report. At the same time, the discursive marker, of course, as our analysis showed, conveys the journalist's personal attitude to the proposition of the statement in more detail than other markers. Com. (2):

The Kuntsevo affair became loud and scattered on news feeds, not only because of a dramatic physical clash between authorities and people rushing under the excavator, but, of course, because residents setting up a cross in the square smartly defend themselves at the right time in the legal field (they draw up a public organization, hire a group of lawyers) and busily operate with numbers (Ryzhkova et al., 2017, p.14).

Like markers, *no doubt*, *of course*, *obviously*, the marker *certainly* expresses a journalistic personality, a subjective assessment of the subsequent proposition. However, the evaluative personal commentary, which is coded by the author into this language expression, also presupposes a fixation of the author's emotional and volitional state at the time the reportage was generated. This discursive marker in a more explicit form indicates that the subsequent statement should be interpreted as the author's point of view on the facts that are covered in the report.

The analyzed reportable statement logically splits into two thematic blocks:

1. the clash of power and people has become the subject of much discussion in the media (a statement of fact; there are no discursive markers demonstrating the journalist's personal attitude to this fact);
2. Kuntsev residents take an active social position (the opinion of the author of the report, introduced by the discursive marker, *of course*, and reinforced by colloquial tokens: *smartly defend themselves in the legal field, busily operate with numbers*).

The discursive marker *of course*, acting as an element of the semantic structure of the second thematic block, forms the modal frame of the reporting statement: the journalist's psychological personality and subjectively assessed fact manifest themselves in the context of those social motives that are relevant for modern Russian society. A journalist, as the author of a personal judgment represented by the second thematic block, positions themselves as a subject who is actively involved in the field of social relations, as a representative of modern society, embodying the point of view and emotional-volitional mood of this society.

7. Conclusion

Texts of analytical reports are considered in our work as such phenomena of journalistic activity that can be empirically observed and evaluated in the aspect of studying discursive markers. These markers function as a means of realizing the pragmatic category in the reporting narrative, which is studied in this publication in aspects of interpersonal interaction, which, in turn, is realized as:

- communicative mediation between individuals and socio-political competencies of a journalist and a reader;
- a communicative phenomenon that can potentially be transferred from one context of use to other contexts (for example, a scientific or popular science text).

Focusing the reader's attention on dynamically illuminated phenomena, the author of the report initiates the discursive act of representing the subjective point of view in terms of the problems to which the text work is devoted. At the same time, discursive markers introduce assertive speech actions, since the very expression of a subjective point of view is interpreted as its categorical statement. In this regard, discursive markers are studied in our work as peculiar indicators of subsequent speech acts, and therefore as central elements of these acts and constructive means of their direct verbal embodiment.

The indisputable fact is that reporting judgments, including discursive markers in their structure, inform the readers of the new relevant informative content, which determines the novelty and theoretical significance from linguistic (semantic and pragmatic) analysis. The features of the functioning of these markers in the mass media can be interpreted (what is done in our work) as a constructive mechanism for establishing and maintaining interpersonal (dialogue) contacts between a journalist and a reader, aimed at evaluating (personal) discussion of the content of important socio-political information.

We believe that subsequent studies of discursive markers as a way of expressing a high degree of truthfulness of the current relevant information content (not only in the context of analytical reports, but also other types of mass media discourses and texts) are intended to provide an analytical basis for a systematic study of the following issues:

- clarification of a research model that combines such pragmatic categories as the voice of a journalist, evidentiality and epistemic modality;
- the ratio of opinions and ideas about socio-political reality expressed by a journalist and objects of journalistic narrative;
- the manipulative possibilities of the discursive manifestation of the journalist's personality in textual works.

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