

MSC 2020**International Scientific and Practical Conference «MAN. SOCIETY.
COMMUNICATION»****VARIETIES OF MENASIVE TRANSPOSITION IN THE CONTEXT
OF PRE-ELECTION DISCOURSE**

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Abstract

The article examines the possibilities of pragmatic transposition of various intentional types into menasives in the context of the Russian 2018 pre-election discourse, and also highlights the types of transposed menasives and determines their pragma-emotional impact on the mass addressee. The starting point of the research is the presentation of transposed threat statements as menacing regulatory actions or menasive regulations aimed at solving the global communicative task of a politician – encouraging voters to vote for their candidacy – and marked by various linguistic means. The election programs of the candidates for the position of President of the Russian Federation in 2018 demonstrate the possibility of a pragmatic transposition of declaratives, promissives, recommendations, demands, warnings, appeals, and constative statements into menasives. The highlighted varieties of transposed menasives are involved in marking the regulative menacing actions of a politician and in creating a special influencing potential of the Russian pre-election discourse. The results obtained allow one to assert that in the context of the Russian pre-election discourse, it is pragmatically effective for a politician to use four functional and semantic varieties of pragmatically transposed menasives, which include declarative threats, warning threats, invocatory threats and recommendation threats. The proposed distinction between the main and transposed threat statements is promising for analyzing the intensity of the pragma-emotional impact of menasives, and the selection of functional and semantic varieties of transposed menasives allows for tracing the tactics of their strategic use in the program materials of politicians.

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Keywords: Menasive statements, political communication, pragmatics, pre-election discourse, standard formula, transposition



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1. Introduction

Threat statements, menacing statements or menasives are an integral part of the election programs of candidates for the position of the President of the Russian Federation in 2018 (Romanov & Novoselova, 2013). Menacing utterances implemented in the election programs of politicians are a specific communicative-intentional type of utterances with the meaning of a threat, characterized by an antecedent-consequential (conditional or causal) link between the action caused by a politician and negative consequences for refusing to carry it out (Romanov & Novoselova, 2013). It is indicative that the connection of events declared by the politician – the antecedent (the conditional component of the threat) and the consequent (the investigative component of the threat) – is known to them as the author of the election campaign and to the voter as the addressee (Romanov & Novoselova 2020). It is important to note that the commission of menacing ("sanctioning") actions by the author of the threat is not their communicative intention, since, using the threat statement, the politician wants to attract the attention of the mass addressee (Bartashova & Polyakova, 2018; Boldyrev & Dubrovskaya, 2019; Skrebtsova, 2020; Volchetskaia & Primak, 2019).

2. Problem Statement

Politicians strategically use election campaigns, consciously realizing in their program materials a *global communicative purpose* related to encouraging voters to prefer a candidate when mentioning various negative facts, events and consequences (Chudinov et al., 2019; Karlova, 2019; Smakman, 2019; Ubozhenko, 2020), which lead voters into an affected or uncomfortable emotional state (Novoselova et al., 2015; Romanov & Novoselova, 2013). It is quite obvious that for the successful realization of the global communicative purpose, candidates mark their threatening statements with various linguistic means containing explicit or implicit indications of negative consequences for voters, non-targeted audiences or opposition representatives (comp. representation of verbal aggression in (Komalova, 2019) and the opposition "we" – "they" in (Molodychenko, 2019), as well as an indication of the conditions or reason for the occurrence of such consequences (Novoselova, 2019).

In a number of works, the linguistic means of superficial manifestation of statements with the meaning of a threat, implemented in the program materials of candidates for the position of the President of the Russian Federation in 2018 in the amount of 229 units (Novoselova, 2019), have been studied, and an explicit (basic) formula of menasives in the sense of J. Austin's concept is proposed and the performative hypothesis (Austin, 1979, p. 80-104, 174), i.e. a formula that most adequately reflects the antecedent and consequential nature of the threat statements (Romanov, & Novoselova, 2020). The realization of the illocutionary threat potential under conditions of agonal political discourse is carried out on the basis of the standard (explicit) formula NP (1) – V (0) – NP (2) – S (3), where V (0) denotes the predicate kernel, NP (1) is the subject of influence, NP (2) is the object of influence, while S (3) is the target component (for more details on illocutionary potential, see: Romanov, 1988, 2020). The illocutionary verb "threaten" is used as a constructive-meaningful kernel of the semantic structure of the threat statements, despite the fact that the specified verb is not used performatively. For example, V. Zhirinovskiy's threat statement «Пресечь деятельность мошенников, которые под видом организации разного рода «тренингов», «сеансов

магии» и прочих «групповых оздоровительных практик» наносят материальный ущерб гражданам и вредят их психике и здоровью» [“To suppress the activities of fraudsters who, under the guise of organizing various kinds of” trainings”, “magic sessions” and other “group health practices”] cause material damage to citizens and harm their mentality and health” refers to the main formula of the pre-election menasives, since its full structure can be represented as follows: “I (1) threaten (0) fraudsters (2) that I will suppress their activities (3) for the fact that they, under the guise of organizing various kinds of “trainings”, “magic sessions” and other “group health practices” cause material damage to citizens and harm their mentality and health!”

There is no doubt that the main forms of pre-election menasive statements (i.e., forms corresponding to the standard formula of threatening statements) include those menasives in which the nomination of the intended purpose is the main one and which explicitly convey *conditional-investigative* relations between the action caused by the politician, and negative consequences for voters for their refusal to perform causal actions, or the *cause-and-effect* relationship between actions committed (or planned to be committed) by representatives of the opposition, and possible sanctions for their commission. In other words, the *main* forms of menasives contain the author's explicit indication of the consecutive (consequent) and conditional or causative components of the threat.

In the pre-election programs of candidates for the position of the President of the Russian Federation in 2018, 74 threat statements were recorded (about 32.31% of the total number of examples) related to the main form of menasives. An insignificant indicator of the frequency of the main forms of menasives indicates that the majority of politicians *do not realize* the illocutionary potential of the threat using the main forms characterized by “a conclusive correspondence of the illocutionary function as an instrument of influence within the limits of the interactive type of a conversation step set by the illocutionary potential and its manifestation level” (Romanov, 1988, p. 41-42). In this regard, it is striking that all participants in the Russian pre-election discourse actively use pragmatically transposed menasives (also transposed menasives or threat statements), which are statements with the meaning of a threat, in which the nomination of the intended purpose is a derivative (Romanov, 2005), i.e. when one of the grammatical forms is used in an unusual function (for the transposition of grammatical forms, see: Romanov, 1988).

Let us recall that the pragmatic transposition of grammatical structures (utterances) is characterized by the use of one or another illocutionary (target) type of constructions in an unusual pragmatic function which is atypical for it (Romanov, 1988). The transposition mechanism is based on the figurative (secondary) use of grammatical structures or forms, when a typical grammatical structure participates in the implementation of a communicative function that is not inherent (not typical) for it. This “pragmatically highlighted” use of syntactic forms, called pragmatic transposition (Romanov, 2005, p. 115), is associated with the departure of the pragmatic meaning of a particular typical syntactic unit beyond the system of normative rules that determine the primary behavior (use) of such a unit.

In the election programs of candidates for the position of the President of the Russian Federation in 2018, 139 transposed menasives were recorded, accounting for about 60.70% of the total number of threatening statements. A characteristic feature of transposed menasive statements is that the politician declares through them negative actions or sanctions directed at voters, the opposition or a non-targeted audience, but does not explicitly indicate the condition or reason for the onset of the declared consequences,

for example: «И масштаб этого вызова требует от нас такого же сильного ответа» [“*And the scale of this challenge requires an equally strong response from us*”] (Putin); «Нанести мощный удар по преступности» [“*To strike a powerful blow against crime*”] (Zhirinovskiy); «Пресечение всевластия ссудного капитала» [“*Suppression of the omnipotence of loan capital*”] (Baburin). An impressive number of transposed menasives naturally raises the question of the pragmatic effectiveness of their implementation. *First*, the use of transposed threat statements by a politician acquires special significance, since they consciously use such threats in program materials. *Secondly*, a candidate's purposeful use of transposed menasives is their tactical technique, indicating “the planned exit of the author of the utterance beyond the normative rules for the functioning of syntactic forms” (Romanov, 2005, p. 115-116) to solve a communicative problem. It is quite obvious that “deviation from the normative use of linguistic units entails the accumulation of various nuances that carry an emotional and functional (pragmatic) load” (Romanov, 2005), which is taken into account in communication when planning and choosing forms of influence on a partner. The circumstances noted above indicate that transposed threat statements have a special influencing potential and allow candidates to exert such a pragma-emotional impact on voters that cannot be produced by the main forms of menasives.

3. Research Questions

In connection with the active implementation of transposed menasives by the participants of the Russian presidential race in 2018, the question naturally arises about the mechanism of transposition in the context of pre-election discourse, as well as about the pragmatic efficiency of functioning in the context of the agonal political discourse of transposed threat statements. In the chosen perspective of reasoning, it is interesting to find out the possibilities of pragmatic transposition of various intentional types into menasives in the context of the Russian 2018 pre-election discourse, as well as to highlight the varieties of transposed menasives and to determine their pragma-emotional impact on the mass addressee. It is also important to establish what pragmatic effect the transposed menasives have on the emotional state of voters and whether this pragmatic effect differs from the influence exerted by the main forms of threat statements.

4. Purpose of the Study

Studying the possibilities of pragmatic transposition in the context of pre-election discourse will reveal the role of transposed menasives in the formation of regulatory actions of a politician aimed at encouraging voters to choose a particular candidate when various negative consequences are mentioned.

5. Research Methods

The starting point of the research is the presentation of transposed threat statements *as menacing regulatory actions* or *menasive regulations* aimed at solving the global communicative task of a politician – encouraging voters to vote for their candidacy – and marked by various linguistic means (Romanov, 1988, 2020). In the chosen perspective, the interpretation of the intentional orientation of the transposed menasives can be carried out only in the context of the agonal political discourse (Romanov & Novoselova, 2013, p. 44-47; Nefedov & Chernyavskaya, 2020). Therefore, the study takes into account the special

context of the pre-election discourse and the position that “transposition is socially conditioned and is a kind of marker of the regulatory use of specific grammatical constructions for the implementation of an influencing effect on a partner” (Romanov, 2005, p. 122).

6. Findings

The material of the research records the presence in the election programs of the participants in the 2018 presidential race of statements related to certain intentional types of constructions, but acquiring an illocutionary menasive tendency. In other words, various intentional types of utterances – different from menasives – function in the program materials of candidates as threat statements, representing *pragmatically transposed menasives*. The electoral programs of politicians demonstrate the possibility of a pragmatic transposition of declaratives, promises, recommendations, demands, warnings, appeals and constative statements into menasives. The targeted use of these statements to express the communicative intention of the threat indicates that they have certain means of expressing antecedent and consequential relations between the action caused by the threat and negative consequences, and the illocutionary potential of such statements has a “complex character” (Romanov, 1988, p. 40-41) and includes simultaneously, for example, a threat and a promise, a threat and an assertion, or a threat and an appeal, where the dominant illocutionary force is the threat (for illocutionary power and potential see: Romanov, 1988).

The pragmatically transposed menasives are based on the truncated standard formula for the menasives NP (1) – V (0) – NP (2), a distinctive feature of which is the absence of superficial substitution of the target argument position S. Transposed menasives contain an explicit indication only of the consequent component of the threat and in the functional plans can be synonymous with other intentional types of statements, such as promises or warnings. As an example of a pragmatically transposed threat statement, let us cite P. Grudinin's menasive *«Мы (1) ограничим (0) аппетиты естественных монополий (2), прекратим (0) спекулятивный рост цен на жизненно необходимые товары и услуги»* [“We (1) will restrict (0) the appetites of natural monopolies (2), we will stop (0) the speculative rise in prices of vital goods and services”], in which he declares two actions: limiting the appetites of natural monopolies and stopping speculative price increases. Undoubtedly, an utterance has the illocutionary potential of a declarative (Romanov, 1988) and can function in conditions of social interaction as a declarative, i.e. as a commitment by the speaker to perform certain actions. However, the implementation of the statement in the conditions of the pre-election communication of a politician-candidate indicates that it cannot be a commitment, since its author does not have sufficient powers to perform the actions he has declared. Therefore, taking into account the context of the agonial discourse, it can be argued that P. Grudinin's statement contains an indication of the candidate performing certain actions aimed at harming opposition representatives and non-targeted audiences, and is focused on encouraging voters to vote for the author of such a statement. In this regard, we can conclude that the declarative functions in the pre-election program of a politician as a threat statement. In other words, the marked statement is a pragmatic transposition of a declarative into a threat, since the nomination of the target purpose in it is a derivative, and its grammatical form is used in an unusual function. It is noteworthy that the statement of P. Grudinin under consideration, functioning as a menasive in the candidate's election program, contains a consequent

component of a threat, but does not contain an explicit implementation of conditional or causative components of a threat (Novoselova & Romanov, 2013).

Pragmatically transposed threat statements, representing, for example, the targeted use of a promise in a threat function, have a certain set of functional and semantic properties that are not fully characteristic of neither menasives nor promises. Thus, a promise is an obligation to do something for *the benefit* of the addressee, while a threat is an obligation to do something to *the detriment* of them (Searle, 1986). In turn, the transposition of a promise into a threat in the context of pre-election discourse represents a politician's obligation to do something in the interests of the voters, but not in the interests of the opposition. For example, in the transposed menasive «Пресечение коррупции не на словах, а на деле даст и экономический, и морально-политический эффект» ["*Suppression of corruption, not just in words, but in fact, will give both economic and moral-political effect*"] P. Grudinin declares to voters the onset of positive changes – «...даст и экономический, и морально-политический эффект» ["...will give both economic and moral-political effect"], which are possible as a result of the politician's commitment to take negative actions against the non-focus audience, namely, «пресечь коррупцию» ["*stop corruption*"]. In this regard, it can be argued that the threats-promises have *double pragmatic orientation*.

The empirical material makes it possible to single out such functional and semantic varieties of transposed menasives as declarative threats, threats-promises, recommendation threats, threats-demands, warning threats, invocatory threats and constative threats, the frequency of implementation of which is reflected in the Table 01.

Table 1. Varieties of transposed menasives

Functional and semantic varieties of pragmatically transposed menasives	Number of examples	Share of the total number of menasives in politicians' programs
declarative threats	81	35.37%
warning threats	17	7.42 %
constative threats	13	5.67 %
invocatory threats	11	4.80 %
recommendation threats	8	3.49 %
threats-promises	6	2.62 %
threats-demands	3	1.31 %
TOTAL	139	60.70 %

The functional and semantic varieties presented in the table give a holistic view of the implementation of transposed menasives in the Russian election discourse in 2018. However, the table does not allow one to determine the strategic use by each of the candidates for the position of the President of the Russian Federation of one or another type of menasives. For this reason, it is advisable to record the information about the frequency of use of functional and semantic varieties of menasives in the program material of each of the participants in the pre-election discourse and present this information in the form of Table 02.

Table 2. Functional and semantic varieties of pragmatically transposed menasives of participants in the Russian 2018 pre-election discourse

	Baburin	Grudinin	Zhirinovskiy	Putin	Sobchak	Suraykin	Titov	Yavlinsky
declarative threats	5	3	6	1	10	20	2	34
threats-promises	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	4
warning threats	2	-	-	2	5	3	2	3
invocatory threats	3	-	1	2	-	-	-	5
recommendation threats	4	-	-	1	1	1	-	1
threats-demands	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
constative threats	3	-	1	-	-	-	5	4

Undoubtedly, the candidates' program materials contain a different number of functional and semantic varieties of transposed menasives, but it can be argued with all confidence that politicians use the communicative “archive” of threat statements presented in Table 2 to provide the planned pragma-emotional impact on voters. It is noteworthy that the candidate who won the election – V. Putin, and the candidates who failed to gain 1% of the votes – B. Titov, M. Suraykin and S. Baburin, did not use any specific varieties of menasives (see <http://vibory-rf.ru>). It is significant that G. Yavlinsky, a politician who used seven functional and semantic varieties of transposed menasives in his election program, and S. Baburin, who used six varieties, failed to attract the attention of a mass audience. It can also be argued that the politician who used only two types of menasives – P. Grudinin, did not induce an impressive number of voters to give preference to his candidacy.

7. Conclusion

The results obtained do not allow one to find a correlation between the number of functional and semantic varieties of transposed menasives in a politician's program materials and the number of votes they won in elections. However, in the context of the Russian pre-election discourse of 2018, it is pragmatically effective for a politician to use four functional and semantic varieties of transposed menasives, which include *declarative threats*, *warning threats*, *appeals threats* and *recommendations threats*. These varieties are recorded in the program materials of V. Putin, the candidate who won the 2018 elections. At the same time, of course, one cannot assume that the use of one or another kind of transposed menasives will unambiguously help a candidate win elections, since politicians use other intentional types of statements in program materials, as well as the main forms of menasives and implicit threats. Consideration of the possibilities of pragmatic transposition of various intentional types into menasives indicates that the selected varieties of transposed menasives are involved in creating a special influencing potential of the Russian pre-election discourse, forming the affected feelings of voters. Transposed menasives are less categorical than menasives, which explicitly indicate the antecedent and consequent components of the threat. The use of transposed threat statements by a politician in the conditions of the pre-election discussion allows them to focus the attention of voters on the possibility of negative consequences, if they prefer to vote for another candidate. The proposed distinction between basic and transposed threat statements is

promising for analyzing the intensity of the pragma-emotional impact of such statements, and the selection of functional and semantic varieties of transposed menasives reflects the menacing tactics of a politician's *strategic* choice of such varieties of threat statements.

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