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VERBALIZATION OF FRAME-SCENARIO "HELP"

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Abstract

In the modern world, research in the field of communication is very popular, as communication is one of the most important and complex types of human activity. Borders between countries are practically being erased, and people have a desire to learn, to study other cultures. Human behaviour is based on the mental categories that we operate on. Accordingly, to understand and predict the behaviour of others as well as to select the correct strategies for their own behaviour, an analysis of the cognitive categories of a particular culture is necessary. It has become easier to learn more about other people and cultures due to the spread of the English language and the establishment of its status as the only global language. However the need for an analysis of communicative behaviour has not disappeared, but has become more acute. This article is devoted to the analysis of communicative acts modelling the concept "HELP" in the English language. The concept "HELP" implies the interaction between the speaker and the hearer and involves some development. Since the methods of cognitive linguistics allow us to most fully reflect the specifics of the phenomena of the physical world through the prism of thinking of speakers of different languages, the most effective is the presentation of this concept in the form of a frame-scenario. The choice of a frame-scenario as a tool can be justified by the complexity of the concept and the inadequacy of the traditional approach to describing the concept.

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Keywords: Concept, frame-scenario, speaker, hearer, communicative act, semantic centre.



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1. Introduction

Cognitive science focuses on categories such as concept, frame, scenario, Gestalt, and others. The presence of a wide variety of categories is explained by the fact that human thinking is characterized by different ways of representing reality (Kholod, 2018; Radishcheva, 2018; Shamsematova, 2020; Tankov, 2019). This work is devoted to the study of the concept "HELP" as a frame-scenario. The choice of a frame-scenario as a tool is due to the complexity of the concept and the lack of a traditional approach to describing the concept (Aupova, Kenzhemuratova, & Albekova, 2016; Minchenkov & Gorelova, 2019).

The peculiarity of this study, in contrast to other works carried out within the domain of cognitive linguistics, is not only an analysis of the language representation of the concept "HELP", but also a study of its functioning in communication. The relevance of the work is due to the importance of the concept "HELP" in world culture. English has gained the status of the only global language due to its wide scope of use. The spread of language leads to the spread of phenomena reflected in it.

The description of the concept "HELP" as a frame-scenario reveals the idea what native English speakers imply when they request and/or offer help. Therefore, knowledge of the functioning of the concept "HELP" in English is necessary for everyone who uses this language. The materials of the presented research can be used in preparing lectures and lessons on topical issues of modern pragmatics and cognitive linguistics, as well as in teaching courses related to the field of intercultural communication and foreign language teaching. The subject of the study is the communicative acts that construct the concept "HELP" in the English language.

The main research methods are lexicographic analysis, contextual-interpretative analysis, and the method of cognitive modelling. When summarizing, systematizing and interpreting the data obtained, a descriptive method, general scientific methods of observation, generalization and comparison are also used.

The cognitive methodology developed by such linguists as Karasik (2002), Babushkin (1996), Boldyrev and Grigorieva (2018), Pimenova (2013), Motorina (2013) is taken as bases. The data under analysis present selected scripts of popular American comedy series (The Big Bang Theory, Brooklyn Nine-Nine, and New Girl, 203 episodes), because the situations depicted in them are closest to the language and cultural reality of native English speakers.

2. Problem Statement

The purpose of research is to compile models of the frame-scenario of the concept "HELP" and to identify the features of its language representation in English-speaking society. Considering existing approaches to the study of concepts, this involves the presentation of the frame-scenario as a sequence of stages that are present in all communicative acts representing this concept as well as a description of the main means of its verbalization based on the material of the English language.

3. Research Questions

Scripts of popular American comedy series were chosen as the material of the study, since the situations depicted in them are closest to the linguistic and cultural reality of native English speakers. The characteristic of the concept "HELP" presented in the article as a frame-scenario is not limited to the analysis of its language representation, but allows us to provide a comprehensive presentation of its functioning in communication.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to model the frame-scenario "HELP" and to reveal the peculiarities of its verbalization in modern English. It presumes the viewing of the communicative acts as a series of successive stages as for the concept "HELP".

5. Research Methods

There is no single view among linguists on the definition of a concept, since each assigns different properties to it and gives them a different degree of importance. The working definition in this study is the definition of M. V. Pimenova (2013), according to which the concept is a representation of a fragment of the world or a part of it that has a complex structure, expressed by certain features, and implemented by various language means.

5.1. The Concept "HELP" as a Frame-Scenario

According to dictionary definitions the name of concept "HELP" can be interpreted as moral or physical efforts, various activities aimed at facilitating someone's work or situation and having a certain benefit for someone regardless of whether the need is reported directly or not.

The concept "HELP" implies an interaction between the speaker and the hearer and involves some development. Therefore the most effective representation of this concept is considered to be in the form of a frame-scenario. A frame-scenario is understood as a standard sequence of stages/ episodes of a frequently repeated situation. Researchers agree that the frame-scenario has a set of basic components, but the number and content vary (Darbanov, 2017; Didenko, 2018; Kerer, 2017). Based on the views of Babushkin (1996) and Motorina (2013) five main parameters can be distinguished that should correspond to all situations expressing a particular frame-scenario: 1) participants of communication and their status; 2) communicative roles of participants; 3) the semiotic center of a communicative act; 4) the purpose of communication (intention); 5) a scheme of the scenario in the form of an algorithm of actions.

At the first stage of data analysis the selected examples were checked for the presence of above mentioned parameters. The typical examples will be considered from the point of view of the implementation of the frame-scenario basic components.

The participants of the communication in the following example are Penny and Leonard (The Big Bang Theory, season 1, episode 2). Penny is a pretty girl who came from a small town to California to become an actress but having no success, was forced to work as a waitress. Leonard is a successful

experimental physicist who received his doctorate degree and works at a well-known research center. He has certain difficulty communicating with the opposite sex. The status relationship between the characters is now defined as "neighbors". Once Penny knocks at Leonard's apartment and asks him to take delivery of furniture if she is not at home (Penny: I was wondering if you could help me out...[...], could you just sign for it and have them put it in my apartment?). Leonard agrees and Penny gives him a spare key (Leonard: Yeah, no problem. Penny: Great, here's my spare key. Thank you).

In the above dialogue, the communicative roles are distributed as follows: Penny needs help, turns to Leonard for it, Penny is the speaker of assistance, and Leonard is the hearer. The semiotic center of a communicative act within the framework of this concept is considered to be an offer or request for help which defines the problem itself. In the example above, a semiotic center is a request for assistance in delivering furniture.

As for the lexical and grammatical patterns used in the dialogue they are typical small talk clichés used by native speakers (I was wondering if you could help me out; could you just sign for it....).

In the above mentioned example an algorithm of the frame-scenario is the following: 1) the speaker reports a problem situation; 2) asks for assistance; 3) the hearer agrees; 4) the speaker thanks; 5) if necessary, the speaker gives more detailed instructions.

In the next communicative act the participants are Boyle, Hitchcock and Terry, the police detectives (Brooklyn Nine-Nine, season 1, episode 3). Boyle and Hitchcock are rank-and-file detectives subordinate to Sergeant Terry. Boyle needs help, Terry and Hitchcock can provide it. Boyle is investigating the case and needs a dummy. Boyle asks Terry to be the very Scary Terry. His desire is to successfully complete the investigation. The request for help with the identification procedure becomes the semiotic center. Terry can't help Boyle this time, as he's working on a special task. However Terry has a desire not to leave Boyle without an assistant and he redirects his request to Hitchcock who agrees without hesitation.

Boyle: Hey, sarge, I need someone to fill out a lineup. Will you be scary Terry?

Terry: Oh, I love being scary Terry. [...] But I'm too busy. I've got a special case I'm working on. Uh, Hitchcock, Boyle needs you to fill out a lineup.

Hitchcock: Oh, great.

In contrast to the first example considered, the lexical-grammatical patterns are less formalized. Boyle announces his intention to use Terry's capabilities with the phrase *I need someone to ...*, bringing his own needs to the fore, despite the fact that Terry's working status is higher than Boyle's. The request is directly addressed with the question *Will you be scary Terry?*. Terry refuses in the form of affirmative sentences: *But I'm too busy. I've got a special case I'm working on.* Terry redirects the request on Boyle's behalf, exactly repeating Boyle's words: *Hitchcock, Boyle needs you to fill out a lineup.*

The algorithm of this event is the following: 1) the speaker reports a problem situation; 2) asks for assistance; 3) the hearer refuses; 4) argues for refusal; 5) helps find a new hearer; 6) the new hearer agrees.

Consider another communicative act. There are three participants – Jess , Nick, and Schmidt. Jess is a high school teacher, Nick is a bartender who didn't graduate from law school, and Schmidt is a marketing specialist (New Girl, season 1, episode 15). These are three close friends who live in the same

apartment. During an American football game, Jess knocked Nick down and he injured his back. Jess offers help. Nick needs it, but doesn't want to accept it. Jess "initiates" a communicative act that focuses on helping him to visit a doctor (Jess: Are you sure you're okay? You're walking like a Disney witch. Let me drive you to your doctor). Nick refuses due to lack of insurance. (Nick: I don't have a doctor. I don't have insurance), Schmidt tries to convince him to go to the hospital in any case (Schmidt: Nick, you need to see a doctor). Then Jess suggests going to her friend who is a doctor who can examine Nick without documents and without payment (Jess: I'll take you to my friend Sadie. She'll just look at you – she won't charge you). Nick agrees, although he tries to stay true to his principle (Nick: Okay, I don't go to doctors!).

As seen from the given example Nick's friends use affirmative statements to persuade him to accept their assistance (Let me drive...; I'll take you to my friend Sadie; Nick, you need to see a doctor). Nick defends his position with negative statements: I don't have a doctor. I don't have insurance. I don't go to doctors.

In the above given example an algorithm of the frame-scenario is the following: 1) the hearer offers his help; 2) the speaker refuses; 3) the speaker argues for refusal; 4) the third person convinces the hearer to accept help; 5) the hearer offers to help, paying attention to the reasons for the refusal; 6) the speaker accepts help.

The data of 389 examples representing the analyzed concept contain basic five components inherent in algorithm of the frame-scenario "HELP". This fact proves the reliability of the chosen methodology. Thus the approach makes it possible to get a more complete picture of the concept and how it functions in the physical world as well as in the language reality.

5.2. Models of Frame-Scenario "HELP"

There are two types of modelling the fame-scenario "Help": 1) direct or indirect request for help, 2) an offer of help. It doesn't matter who initiates a communicative act.

There are 233 examples of the first type. Let us consider one example in detail (The Big Bang Theory, season 1, episode 5):

Lesley: So, I'm glad I ran into you, the physics department string quartet needs a new cellist.

Leonard: What happened to Elliot Wong?

Lesley: He switched over to high energy radiation research, had a little mishap, and now the other guys are uncomfortable sitting next to him. So, are you in?

Leonard: Yeah, sure, why not.

Lesley: Great, we rehearse on Tuesdays at your place.

The semiotic center of the communicative act is a request for help. The request itself is expressed indirectly, since the main sentence which assumes the designation of the problem does not indicate the subject: *The physics department string quartet needs a new cellist*. Leonard realizes that it is about him. When Leslie is unclear about his decision, she uses a direct question: *So, are you in?*

When Leonard agrees, Leslie doesn't thank him directly but comments on his decision with the exclamation *Great* and gives details about rehearsals. In this example, the algorithm of the communicative act can be displayed as a sequence of eight stages: 1) the speaker reports the predicament;

2) indirectly asks for help; 3) the hearer requests additional information; 4) the speaker gives details; 5) the speaker asks about the hearer's decision; 6) the hearer agrees; 7) the speaker expresses joy; 8) gives detailed instructions.

Let us consider an example of the second type, when the initiator of help is the speaker. Penny is a waitress who recently moved into a new apartment (The Big Bang Theory, season 1, episode 4). Penny looks into the apartment to the neighbors, reports that she is going to the market and asks if the guys need to buy anything (Penny: Hi, hey. I'm running out to the market, do you guys need anything?). The semiotic center of the communicative act is the offer of shopping assistance. Penny has a desire to be useful and becomes the initiator of assistance. Sheldon appreciates her offer and is ready to take advantage of it, thereby he takes the role of the hearer of the communicative act. However, throughout the series, Sheldon has some difficulties with meeting social norms of behavior according to which when you are offered to buy something in the store the urgently needed things are meant. Four dozen eggs are not one of these things. A literal understanding of the offer of help adds a humorous effect to the situation:

Sheldon: I need eggs. Four dozen should suffice.

Penny: Four dozen?

Sheldon: Yes, and even distributed among brown, white, free range, large, extra-large and jumbo.

Penny: Okay, one more time?

Sheldon: Never mind, you won't get it right, I'd better come with you.

Penny: Oh, yay!

The communicative act develops according to the following stages: 1) greeting; 2) the speaker describes circumstances that suggest some utility; 3) the speaker offers assistance in the form of a question about the needs of the hearer; 4) the speaker comments on the successfully developed situation; 5) the hearer reports need, i.e. accepts help; 6) instructs the speaker; 7) removes part of the obligations from the speaker and assumes them.

In the following example the action takes place in a police station (Brooklyn Nine-Nine, season 1, episode 3). Detective Boyle is coming to the archive and hears the irritated shouts of sergeant Terry. As Charles Boyle enters the room, he sees the Sergeant sitting in front of the Dollhouse among the scattered parts. The Sergeant realizes that he looks ridiculous and so explains his predicament (Terry: Um... I'm building this dollhouse for my girls. It's their birthday tomorrow. I told my wife I'd get it done). Boyle reports that as a child, he had the same Dollhouse, which indicates his desire to help implicitly, then observing Terry's perplexity Boyle offers his help explicitly (Boyle: I had the same exact one when I was a kid! Do you want some help, big man?). Terry refuses Boyle's help, as it is difficult for him to admit that such a worthy man and a police officer is not able to cope with a silly problem (Terry: No! I can do this. It's just driving me a little crazy). However, Terry subconsciously understands that he needs help, and in a conversation with himself, he turns to Boyle for advice (Terry: Where do I fix the princess tower, Boyle?). Boyle tries to answer and help (Boyle: On the side of the turret ...), but the sergeant does not realize that he asked out loud and abruptly refuses help (Terry: Not now, Boyle). Thus, the example combines two types of frame-scenario – offer of help and request for help, but they are united by the problem – difficulties in assembling a Dollhouse. It is reasonable to consider the offer of help as the dominant type, since it is carried out deliberately. The stages are arranged in the following

sequence: 1) the hearer explains the essence of the predicament without the intention to get help; 2) the speaker describes circumstances that suggest some utility; 3) the speaker offers help with a direct question; 4) the hearer refuses help; 5) the hearer argues for refusal; 6) the hearer unconsciously asks for help; 7) the speaker immediately begins to provide it; 8) the hearer refuses, without understanding the intentions of the speaker.

5.3. Verbalization of Frame-Scenario " HELP"

The invariant models of the frame-scenario "HELP" were analyzed due to language means representing this concept. Because of the fact that each specific situation includes different participants, their goals are dictated by the context, the semiotic center shifts each time depending on the problem encountered; it was almost impossible to identify the characteristic features of verbalization of most components. The data give the following statistics that 10% of all the examples were expressed nonverbally (through gestures, facial expressions, body movements, etc.).

5.3.1. Verbalization of a Request for Help

The most frequent means of verbalizing a request for help are syntactic constructions: I need... I need you..., I need your / some help if I can... If you can..., imperative + please will you... I would like you to ... I want you to... For example:

1) do I need ...; I need you to...; I need your / some help.

A request expressed with the verb *need* signals that the speaker needs something that they cannot achieve on their own. Usually it is a statement though being perceived as a request by the hearer. In the analyzed material, this type of the request is more often used in situations where the social status of participants is equal or the speaker is at a higher level than the hearer.

Consider the example: Leonard and Sheldon are friends who live in the same apartment. In the given situation, Leonard is the speaker, and Sheldon is the hearer. A semiotic center is a request for emergency assistance. Sheldon was robbed when he was in another state, and he was not able to return home (Sheldon: I'm in Kingman, Arizona, and I need you to pick me up) (The Big Bang Theory, season 8, Episode 1).

2) Can I...? You can...?

The second most frequent type of the request is the construction with the modal verb *can*. Unlike the first example involving the verb of necessity, this type of the sentence is interrogative and less serious: Friends Sheldon and Leonard are having lunch in the University cafeteria and Leonard accidentally gets dirty in ketchup. He doesn't have any napkins, and Sheldon has four on the tray (Leonard: Oh, hell. Can I have a napkin?) (The Big Bang theory, season 3, Episode 5).

3) imperative + please

The imperative mood is often used to express wills and orders, but in the analyzed communicative acts when accompanied by the introductory word *please*, they become requests. For example: Jess's boy friend invited her to spend Christmas with his family in London, but because of bad weather conditions her flight was delayed; trying to excuse herself she asks him to explain the whole situation to his parents.

(Jess: Ryan, hi. My flight is delayed. Please tell your parents that this is not like me. I'm never late. I'll talk to you later) (New girl, season 4, episode 11).

4) will you be...?

The communicative acts where the phrase *will you be...?* shows that there is a problem with necessity to assist the speaker, are defined as a rather polite request for help.

For example, captain Holt needs help and he uses this phrase when he asks Amy Santiago, a young detective, for help (captain Holt: I have the complete Brooklyn broiler files. He was given three life sentences, and it should have been two. So I've already contacted the D.A. about the error. Will you please help me figure out who set those other fires?) (Brooklyn Nine-Nine, season 2, episode 10).

5) I'd like you to ... ; I want you to ...

These phrases are very straightforward. They focus on the speaker's intention to get help: Captain Holt: Terry, I would like you to accompany me to the gun range (Brooklyn Nine-nine, season 1, episode 5).

The data analyzed show that there are other ways to express a request for help. Consider the statistics: I need ...; I need you to...; I need you/some help – 37% (86 examples); Can I...? Can you...? – 20% (46 examples); Imperative + please –13% (30 examples); Will you...? – 10% (23 examples); I'd like you to...; I want you to... – 9% (20 examples); Other types – 11% (25 examples).

5.3.2. Verbalization of an Offer of Help

It is very difficult to identify general means of verbalizing an offer of help because usually such an act does not require permission and, accordingly, the person does not need to ask the other person whether to perform an action or not. In most cases (65% that is 102 examples out of 156), the person analyzing the other person's problem proceeds to directly provide moral or material assistance. In other cases, the person comments on their actions using such phrases as Let me.../Let me help, I can.../I can help, I will

1. Let me.../Let me help. Dictionary definitions illustrate that the most frequent verb that is used to offer help is the verb to let (Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (2007), Merriam-Webster's Advanced Learner's English Dictionary (2008), Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2010)). The data analyzed prove it. For example: Leonard apologizes for the inconvenience and immediately comes to the rescue with the comment *let me help you*. Leonard immediately puts himself in the position of the speaker, so he sees that the hearer needs help: Penny (entering): Raj, your car is blocking me.... Leonard: Sorry, let me help you. (The Big Bang Theory, season 3, episode 13). The problem itself is not verbalized but is manifested in the actions of the participants.

2. I can.../ I can help. When the speaker learns about the hearer's predicament they assess their abilities and report using the modal verb *can*. The hearer treats such a comment as an offer of help and responds with consent or refusal.

For example, Sheldon is in a police station in Arizona since he was robbed. He called his friend Leonard in California and asked him for help. While he waits, he hopes that the criminal will be caught soon and the stolen goods will be returned to him. He approaches the officer and asks if there is any information on his case. Receiving a negative response, Sheldon offers completely inappropriate help,

referring to the well-known fictional detective Sherlock Holmes. In this way, Sheldon assumes the role of the speaker and attributes the role of the hearer to the officer, although the officer is not a hearer in this case. Sheldon: Well, perhaps I can help. Sherlock Holmes always says when you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth. Now, have, have you tried doing that? ("The Big Bang Theory", season 8, episode 1)

3. I willThe use of the *will* signals that a person intends to perform an action which can be considered an offer of help. For example, Howard: Me, too. How about we blow off dessert, go home early, I'll do that laundry. Bernadette: Thank you. (The Big Bang Theory, season 6, episode 16).

The spouses Howard and Bernadette have disagreements about the distribution of responsibilities in the family. When they see that the other couple's problems are much more serious, they decide not to quarrel over trifles. That is why Howard offers to wash the laundry for which Bernadette thanks him.

Thus, the analyzed material has showed that there are 22 examples with the *let*; 17 examples with *can*; 5 examples with the *will*.

6. Findings

The research has shown that the concept "HELP" can be represented as a sequence of interconnected stages. The description of it as a frame-scenario turned out to be effective, since the models of its functioning are identified. The communicative act develops according to the first model, when its participant needs help and asks for it. The second model is used when the participant offers help regardless of whether help is needed or not.

The most common speech patterns that the participant perceives as a request are phrases like: I need ..., I need you to ..., I need your / some help, Can I ..., Can you ..., Imperative + please, Will you ..., I'd like you to ..., I want you to In communicative acts related to providing assistance, often there is no need to express the offer of assistance explicitly, but it is always implicitly present. Nevertheless, phrases with the verbs *let*, *can* and *will* can be considered characteristic of this type of frame-scenario.

7. Conclusion

The study of the language material has showed that the concept "HELP" can be presented as a frame-scenario, since all the communicative acts that represent the concept have revealed the basic components of the scenario. Some trends in the verbalization of the analyzed concept have been identified. The most common speech phrases that the participant perceives as a request are the following: I need ..., I need you to..., I need your/some help, Can I..., Can you..., Imperative + please, Will you..., I'd like you to..., I want you to....

In situations related to providing assistance, an offer of help is always implicit. Nevertheless, the phrases with the words *let*, *can*, and *will* are typical for this type of frame-scenario.

Thus the approach presented in the study allows to deeper understand the concept as it reveals its dynamics.

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