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**MODES AND TYPES OF LINGUISTIC TRANSFORMATIONS  
WITHIN NEGATIVE EVALUATIVE FRAMEWORK**

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*Abstract*

The article is devoted to the pragmatic axiological analysis of linguistic means which can modify the negative evaluative potential of the utterance within the framework of English dramatic discourse, which is regarded as a type of stylized communication. The author presents the system of lexical, morphological, and stylistic intensifiers of negative evaluation as well as key modes and patterns employed by the participants of stylized dialogues in order to decrease expressiveness and emotional level of negative evaluative statement. The research shows that the most effective means of negative evaluative transformations belong to the lexical level and include the pattern which combines negative evaluative adjectives and nouns within one utterance and the pattern of lexical evaluative concentration. The relevant category of emotivity is also engaged in the study as a communicative characteristic affected by the system of intensifiers and de-intensifiers. Moreover, modification of the axiological aspect of the utterance is studied in dynamic terms, comparing and contrasting negative evaluative statements in the dramatic discourse of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The author arrives at the conclusion that though the modifying evaluative paradigm of linguistic means remains the same in both historical periods, its quality has moved considerably towards higher levels of evaluative intensity and categoricity with the help of higher frequency of intensifiers in the dramatic discourse of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and their substandard nature.

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**Keywords:** Negative evaluation, English dramatic discourse, stylized communication, intensification, de-intensification.



## 1. Introduction

In the study of stylized conversational communication, one of the variants of which is dramatic discourse, several of its main characteristics are always highlighted, which, along with appellativeness, subjectivity, expressiveness, and emotionality, include evaluation. It is in everyday informal communication that a person has the opportunity to give free rein to their feelings and can relatively freely express criticism or evaluative attitude to the objects of reality. It is not so much the content side of the message that matters in everyday communication but the ability to emotionally unload.

Emotions are very clearly manifested in a stylized dialogue through expressing negative evaluation, when the communicant, through the criticism, violates the correct tone of the conversation and provokes a situation of psychological distress. The stylized dialogue as a notion refers to the reflection of the free communication patterns in the course of communication between characters in fiction. In fact, the dramatic discourse can be considered the closest type of speech to conversational discourse, since it focuses on the most characteristic features of informal everyday communication due to the fact that the characters of the plays communicate in a pragmatic situation equivalent to everyday conversational discourse (Starostina, 2010). Negative evaluation in the English stylized colloquial speech, represented by dramatic discourse, can be expressed using various language means. Most often, to express their negative attitude towards someone or something, the communicants choose semantic means, since a lexical unit itself can include an evaluation component of varying degrees of intensity, thereby giving the speaker ample opportunity to express an emotional or emotional-intellectual type of assessment.

However, the intensity of negative evaluation of the whole utterance is determined not only by the evaluative senses of lexical units; it can also be corrected with the help of auxiliary means: intensifiers of negative evaluation (with an increase in categorization of the utterance) and de-intensifiers (in the case of its decrease). The axiological potential of the English language allows one to significantly increase or decrease the categorization of the evaluative statement due to the whole range of additional language tools. In conflict situations, when a participant of stylized communication needs not only to express their sharp disapproval of the actions of the interlocutor, but also to show the depth and strength of their feelings, the semantic means of expressing negative evaluation may not be enough. In such cases, the evaluative potential of lexemes is transformed by means of various language levels. The main function of such tools is to raise the categoricity of negative evaluative statements and, as a result, enhance its emotional impact. In the opposite situation, if it is necessary to smooth out a growing quarrel, the axiological intensity of the lexical unit can be reduced through the use of various de-intensifiers. The use of negative evaluative de-intensifiers is also dictated by the principle of communicative politeness, i.e. the need to mitigate opinions that may seem unfavorable to the interlocutor.

## 2. Problem Statement

The actuality and relevance of the research is based on the necessity for turning to linguistic means of modifying negative evaluation in English stylized communication as effective methods of modeling the intensity of a negative evaluative remark depending on the pragmatic settings of communicants and the specifics of discursive parameters in the communicative situation. Means of intensification and de-

intensification of negative evaluation hold significant influence on the implementation of the axiological potential of the entire statement, i.e., they adjust the intensity of the evaluation attribute in one direction or another, which allows the addressee to express their negative attitude ratio of the desired degree of categorization. The topic we touched on has not yet been studied: in particular, we were not able to find any special research devoted to the study of this language phenomenon in the framework of stylized communication. Indeed, the English-language means of modelling negative evaluation have not been studied either from the point of view of their diversity or from the point of view of additional implementation of categories of emotiveness and expressiveness within the axiological framework of the utterance. Moreover, at the present stage, there have not yet been any studies conducted with the aim of systematizing specific linguistic methods for transforming negative evaluation in a particular type of discourse.

### **3. Research Questions**

This article presents the results of a qualitative linguistic study, which included the following research questions:

How is the modification of negative evaluation in a remark implemented on different levels of the language within the framework of the English-language dramatic discourse? What is the paradigm of linguistic intensifiers and de-intensifiers within negative evaluative statements?

Which of the tools to increase or decrease the negative appraisal potential of the whole judgment are used more frequently? What linguistic techniques for modeling negative evaluation are most in demand by participants in stylized communication?

What is the role of such transformative markers in the implementation of the emotional background of the evaluative statement?

What is the dynamics of using means of modifying evaluation when comparing the negative evaluative aspect of the English-language dramatic discourse of the early 20th and early 21st centuries?

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The research is aimed at defining and estimating the system of functional-pragmatic means of movement of the negative mark on the rating scale in the framework of the English-language stylized communication represented by dramatic discourse; analyze the significance of various ways of modifying negative evaluation in a remark to achieve the desired degree of intensity; to reveal the nuances of the emotional plan of negative appraisal judgment conveyed by a combination of the actual evaluative lexical unit and the modifier of one or another language level; to trace the qualitative dynamics in the use of intensifiers and de-intensifiers in English-language stylized communication of the 20th and 21st centuries.

### **5. Research Methods**

The theoretical guidelines and the methodological background of the research are the works on the functional semantics of evaluation and general axiological potential of language and speech, with relevant factors of emotivity and expressiveness taken into account (Arutyunova, 1988; Chekulai et al., 2019;

Prokhorova et al., 2015; Soldatkina, 2012; Telitsyna, 2016; Wolf, 2002; Zagraevskaya, 2015; Zhgun, 2017) as well as on the linguistic characteristics of the English-language dramatic discourse (Kharkovskaya & Starostina, 2014; Krivchenko, 2016; Kravchuk, 2015; Samboruk, 2019; Starostina, 2010; Zaitseva, 2019; Zinkovskaya, 2015).

The research has been conducted on the linguistic material including one thousand negative evaluation remarks containing one or another assessment modifier; all the remarks have been selected by the method of continuous sampling from plays of English and American playwrights of the 20th and 21st centuries (Ch.R. Kennedy, L. Dunsany, G.B.Shaw, J. Galsworthy, J.L. Horton, K. Burns, J.M.Synge, D. Wilson, C. Abernethy, B. Farrell, and others.) At the first stage, the means of intensifying and de-intensifying in negative evaluative remarks were pinpointed, a typology was determined, and a systematization was proposed according to the language level or language model. At the second stage, a qualitative comparative analysis of the discursive parameters of negative evaluative statements with a modeling component was carried out, a communicative context that influenced the choice of type and mode of transformation of assessment in the dramatic discourse of the 20th and 21st centuries was determined, and the emotional component of negative evaluative statements was thoroughly studied.

## 6. Findings

### 6.1. Intensification of negative evaluation: lexical means

The following classification for the means of increasing the negative evaluative potential of the utterance in the English-speaking stylized colloquial speech has been developed:

- 1) lexical means of intensifying the assessment;
- 2) morphological agents;
- 3) stylistic means.

This division is equally true for negative appraisal statements of the beginning of the XX century and for speech acts of negative evaluation of the modern period. Thus, most often negative assessment is enhanced by semantic means, since it is precisely these that give the speaker the broadest possibilities for expressing not only their negative attitude to a person or an object, but also the shades of their feelings and emotions. When analyzing the morphological-semantic means of expressing negative evaluation, a relatively large group of statements was singled out, the negative attitude of which is expressed using a combination of evaluative nouns and evaluative adjectives; it is almost impossible to determine which element is leading and which one serves as an amplifier. In this case, two lexical elements significantly intensify the estimated potential of each other. This method serves as the first strong lexical mode to intensify negative evaluation in a remark. All such speech acts are definitely judgemental and opinionated expressing the highest level of disapproval; consequently, they will not contribute to the smooth flow of the conversation but would rather evoke communicative tension or even a conflict.

*WIDOW QUIN* And who hit you? A robber maybe? *MAHON*. ... he the devil a robber, or anything else, but a dirty, stuttering lout. ... *WIDOW QUIN*. A hideous, fearful villain. (Synge, "The Playboy of the Western World", 1907). In the presented linguistic illustration the dialogue is taking place in the American province, where the closely-knit local community unites in their strong disapproval of a young outsider

who is allegedly a criminal. With their expressive evaluative utterances, in which the nouns and adjectives of negative assessment are interwoven, the locals in fact pronounce the sentence of enmity and hatred.

LISA (...) *I don't want to be pretending that we've got anything to say to each other because we don't, she's a stupid airhead, ... she doesn't have anything in common with my father ... [Lisa stops talking because she is starting to cry.] (Amsterdam, "Beautiful Clear-Eyed Woman", 2003).* The example reflects a difficult family situation where Lisa shares her thoughts and attitudes towards her stepmother with her interlocutor. The combination of a negative evaluative adjective and a similar-type noun coupled with the girl's non-verbal reaction, specified by the playwright, intensifies the degree of the negative judgement at the same time highlighting the corresponding emotions of the personage, her incomprehension, despair, sadness.

The level of emotivity and expressiveness of the negative assessment can be additionally boosted in the contemporary stylized communication with the assistance of abundant obscene vocabulary including vulgar and taboo lexical items. This was not the case in the negative assessment utterances of the previous historical period.

An equally effective way of intensification in English stylized colloquial speech of both historical periods under consideration is the so-called method of concentration, when the object of assessment is characterized not by one adjective or noun of negative evaluation, but by several, which are actualized in the function of homogeneous members of the sentence: STEWART. *You are totally wrapped up in this bourgeois, consumerist, GAP/Starbucks mentality. ... JACKIE. You have lost your mind. (Folwell, "Boise", 2005).* It is quite natural that such a complex of negative assessment tools violates the favorable course of communication and, being addressed inconsistently to the interlocutor, contributes to a conflict situation.

The degree of categoricity of negative evaluation can also be increased due to special intensifying lexical items, which, in fact, do not carry any additional meaning and fulfill the only function of enhancing the attribute. An example here is the determinants: JOHN. *Don't make such a mistake. (Walter, "The Easiest Way", 2004).* The range of intensifiers also includes degree adverbs (*incredibly, desperately, awfully, perfectly, absolutely, completely, impossibly, extremely*); MARY. *Oh, he's a dreadfully wicked man, I know that-- (Kennedy, "The Servant in the House", 1908).* FRANNY. *...shut up? I swear to God t you're both completely incapable of noticing that anybody else exists! (Amsterdam, "Beautiful Clear-Eyed Woman", 2003).* These intensifiers are widely used in statements of a negative assessment of both time periods, however, in modern English stylized colloquial speech, slangism *f\*\*\*ng* is also added to them. Basically, this token-enhancer is used in the 21<sup>st</sup> century youth speech (along with literary degree adverbs), dramatically increasing its expressiveness.

## 6.2. Intensification of negative evaluation: morphological and stylistic means

The second group of means of increasing the categoricity of evaluative statements - morphological tools - is much less frequent in English stylized colloquial speech of both time periods. In this group, the negative grade can be increased by using a comparative or superlative degree of adjectives: MRS. HUNTER. *The idea! When I've never called on them. They are the worst social pushers I've ever known. (Fitch, "The Climbers", 1905).* SYLVIA. *You're ridiculous.* CHRISTIAN. *You're ridiculous-er. (Alan Haehnel, "The 1st Annual Achadamee Awards", 2006)* In fact, the adjectives *bad* and *ridiculous* already have an evaluative meaning that would be enough to express a negative-estimated attitude; however, with the help

of a morphological tool, the speaker emphasizes the depth of their emotions, thereby increasing the overall expressiveness of the statement.

The third group includes stylistic means of intensifying negative evaluation, which are also used in English-speaking stylized colloquial speech by the interlocutors at the beginning of the 20th as well as the beginning of the 21st centuries. First of all, this is repetition as one of the possible methods that the communicant resorts to, willing to convey such shades of their negative attitude as resentment, indignation, irony: *HYPATIA. You can't help yourself. Come along. [She seizes his sleeve]. Fool, fool: come along. (Shaw, "Misalliance", 1909)* *FRANNY. ...and everybody agrees Frank is the villain, and he is the villain but, well, you know. (Amsterdam, "Beautiful Clear-Eyed Woman", 2003)* A similar effect, that is, an increase in the intensity of negative assessment and an increase in the emotional power of a statement, is achieved by repeating either the evaluation marker itself or its amplifier.

To stylistic means of intensifying negative evaluation in the English-language stylized communication of both epochs the use of nouns, the meaning of which is metaphorized, can also be attributed: *RIDGEON. That's true. Her life will be a hell. (Shaw, "The Doctor's Dilemma", 1906)* *DOT. You are a lie and a disease to me. (Marnich, "Blur", 2006)*. However, the indicated stylistic device is used in English stylized colloquial speech of both periods rather rarely, probably because of some cumbersomeness, pathetic nature of such constructions, and also due to the fact that typical colloquial speech does not tend to be colorful due to its (stylized) spontaneity.

### **6.3. Linguistic means of de-intensification in a negative evaluative statement**

The use of de-intensifiers of negative evaluation is dictated by the principle of communicative politeness, i.e. the need to soften opinions that may seem unpleasant either to the interlocutor or a third party. De-intensifiers of negative evaluation, as well as its amplifiers, are visible in the English stylized colloquial speech of both centuries. The level of their diversity and frequency are in contrast, however, as the de-intensified negative assessment utterances of the 20<sup>th</sup> century outnumber the remarks of the same type in the stylized dialogue of the recent era. The plausible reasoning for that is the fact that the communicants of the beginning of the 20th century were more oriented towards the feelings and reactions of their interlocutor, trying to preserve the favorable course of dialogue as far as possible; modern communication has a more subjective, individualized character, that is, the communicants of the beginning of the 21st century are guided primarily by their own thoughts and feelings, striving for the most adequate transfer of them, and only then focusing on the possible reaction of the interlocutor.

The first effective means of reducing the categoricity of negative-evaluative statements are introductory predicative constructions like *I think, I suppose, if I am not mistaken*. They emphasize the subjectivity of the personal opinion, make it less categorical, suggest the possibility of other assessments of the same object: *ENID. [Looking at her.] Oh, I think they're stupid, all of them. (Galsworthy, "Strife", 1909)* *DENNY. I'm sorry. I think I say stupid things. (Farrel, "Wonderbred", 2002)*. In the second example, negative self-esteem sounds especially consistent and, combined with an apology in the first sentence, expresses the speaker's desire to establish or restore friendly relations with the interlocutor, and avoid a conflict situation. It should be noted that such an intention to one degree or another takes place in all speech acts where there is a mitigation of a negative assessment.

Another means of de-intensifying a negative assessment is to use special lexical markers which approximate the attribute of the object under evaluation. Approximators, i.e. means of expressing approximation, are, first of all, such words and phrases as *somewhat*, *pretty*, *rather*, *more or less*, *a bit*, *a little*. Approximators help to alleviate the psychological stress that is somehow present when a negative assessment appears in communication, especially if this assessment is addressed to the immediate interlocutor. *B. B. ... but really I'm beginning to suspect that our young friend is rather careless.* (Shaw, "The Doctor's Dilemma", 1906) *STEWART. I know what it is. It's just... Don't you think it's a little inappropriate for a sister to be giving one to her brother?* (Folwell, "Boise", 2005).

In addition to introductory predicative constructions and approximators, such a technique as motivation is often used to de-intensify a negative estimate. The use of this technique is equivalent in quantity and quality in the dramatic discourse of the early 20th and 21st centuries. It is with the help of this optional element of the modal evaluative framework that the addressee substantiates their negatively evaluative attitude to the person or subject, points out the objective correctness of their statement, explains their point of view, thereby reducing the overall expressiveness of the speech act and leveling its emotional form: *ETHAN. Come on, man. That's ridiculous. We need prep time. Murph needs to get with the production house on the sound effects, music cues.* (Farrell, "The Twilight of Nantucket", 2002). Motivation contributes to the rationalization of negative evaluation statements, minimizing the emotional component of a stylized communicative situation.

## 7. Conclusion

Thus, the emotionally expressive evaluative means of stylized colloquial speech is a large and diverse class, so one aspect of the use of evaluative words is their choice according to the degree of intensity of the evaluative meaning contained in them. At the same time, the emotional and evaluative components of the word meaning often significantly transform the semantic dominant of the word. The communicant, resorting to various linguistic tools to express a negative assessment, can further strengthen these components of meaning by using additional intensification methods that increase the categoriality of the statement and more clearly convey the emotions experienced by a person. Consequently, intensity in the negative assessment of the whole utterance is determined not only by evaluative senses of lexical units; it can also be modified with the help of additional linguistic means: intensifiers and de-intensifiers.

The communicant, resorting to the help of lexical means to express negative evaluation, can further strengthen these components of meaning through the use of various intensification methods that will increase the expressiveness of the statement and convey the emotions more vividly. On the other hand, expressing their negative attitude towards something or someone through a negative assessment, the communicant often does not intend to provoke a negative reaction from the interlocutor and thereby come into conflict with him, but rather wants to maintain a favorable atmosphere of communication, to avoid possible violation of speech cooperation, defending, however, their own point of view. In such a situation, it seems quite natural that the speaker is trying to lower the degree of categoriality of the expressed negative assessment by means of auxiliary means - introductory predicative constructions, approximators or motivation. In general, it should be emphasized once again that for a modern person to express their own opinion not sharply and categorially, thereby discouraging the interlocutor from wanting to continue the

conversation, but, on the contrary, doing it in a soft, unobtrusive way, stimulating the entire process of communication. It is precisely these goals that the means of the de-intensification of negative assessment serve in the English stylized colloquial speech.

The use of additional means of correcting the categoricity of a negative assessment also shows how much the sociocultural characteristics of communicants that have changed over the century influence their speech behavior. If in negative evaluative statements of the beginning of the 20th century quite often there are de-intensifiers of different linguistic levels - lexical units, introductory constructions that emphasize the subjectivity of the speaker's opinion, and the recorded intensifiers are strictly standard; then in utterances of negative evaluation of the beginning of the 21st century, de-intensifiers are not so frequent, while intensifiers, on the contrary, are numerous and varied - from literary to highly substandard. Such dynamic characteristics might clearly reflect the tendencies of modern society towards free self-expression at the linguo-axiological level.

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