



Section 1. Applied Linguistics

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THE REFERENTIAL AND SOCIO-PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF PRONOUNS THAT GENERATE IMPLICIT MEANING IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE DISCOURSE

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Abstract

The realisation of implicit content within the language system is not confined to the semantic potential of lexical units, but is also closely connected with the referential and socio-pragmatic functions of pronouns in discourse. Pronouns do not merely replace nominal expressions; their interpretation often depends on contextual, situational and interpersonal knowledge shared by communicators. The choice between personal, demonstrative, indefinite and other pronominal forms may signal social distance, group affiliation, inclusion or exclusion, evaluation and the speaker's attitude without expressing these meanings explicitly. From this perspective, pronouns constitute an important linguistic mechanism through which implicit meaning emerges at the intersection of reference, discourse structure and pragmatic intention. Their interpretation therefore requires the addressee to identify not only the intended referent but also the social and communicative implications encoded indirectly through pronominal choice.

Keywords: *implicit meaning, syntactic implicitness, syntactic structure, context, presupposition*

Introduction

The distinction between explicit and implicit content in Russian scholars' approaches to implicit information is likewise not limited to the formal expression of the linguistic sign. Drawing on K. A. Dolinin's position, the authors define implicitness as information that is not directly expressed in a text by linguistic signs but is inferred from the

utterance constructed through those signs. This idea is formulated as follows: "Implicitness is that part of information which is not explicitly expressed in a text by linguistic signs, but which is intended in the utterance formed on the basis of those signs and is derived from the utterance in the process of interpretation" (Anikeeva and Balashova, 2020, p. 182). A position that more clearly

demonstrates the independent role of the syntactic level in the formation of implicit meaning is attributed to I. Y. Chernukhina. Anikeeva and Balashova present her view as follows: “Implicit content is formed at the compositional-syntactic level as a result of a particular arrangement of textual components. The interaction between the meanings of these components leads to the emergence of new semantics that is not formally expressed at the lexical level” (Anikeeva and Balashova, 2020, p. 183).

Literature Review

Previous studies approach implicit meaning from psycholinguistic, semantic, pragmatic and textual perspectives. Anikeeva and Balashova (2020) emphasise that implicit information may arise through the compositional and syntactic organisation of textual components, while İsmayıl demonstrates that implicit affirmation can be verbalised through syntactic as well as lexical, semantic and morphological means. Mammadli et al. relate meaning interpretation to textual integrity and intersentential relations, whereas Rzayeva and Yusifova highlight the role of background knowledge, context, ellipsis, zero anaphora and presupposition in reconstructing unexpressed information.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of the study is to determine how implicit meaning is formed and interpreted through syntactic means. Its main objectives are to identify syntactic structures capable of conveying non-explicit content, to examine the role of ellipsis, word-order variation, rhetorical questions, parcellation and syntactic non-expression, and to clarify how context, presupposition and the addressee’s background knowledge contribute to the reconstruction of implicit meaning.

Materials and Methods

The material of the study consists of linguistic and psycholinguistic research on implicit meaning, text linguistics and syntactic-pragmatic interpretation, including scholarly articles, monographs and dissertation abstracts in Azerbaijani and Russian. The study employs descriptive-analytical, functional-semantic, contextual and pragmatic meth-

ods. Theoretical positions are comparatively synthesised in order to establish the relationship between syntactic structure, textual context and inferential meaning without introducing material not supported by the analysed sources.

Main part

The particular importance of the syntactic level lies in the fact that hidden information often emerges from the relationship between what is expressed and what remains unexpressed. A component of an utterance may be omitted, another may be moved to the initial position, the ordinary syntactic sequence may be altered, or a sentence may formally belong to one communicative type while serving a different communicative purpose. In such cases, the addressee reconstructs the full content of the utterance by relating the information provided by its syntactic form to the context and communicative situation. As İsmayıl notes, “*For the functional-semantic category of affirmation, implicit and explicit types of affirmation may be distinguished. Such affirmation is verbalised by lexical, semantic, morphological and syntactic means*” (İsmayıl, 2022, p. 10). In İsmayıl’s approach, implicit affirmation is presented as a form of meaning that does not coincide with direct meaning, requires a more complex interpretative process for its comprehension, and is context-dependent. The author particularly emphasises that “*Implicit affirmation is expressed by means that are not overtly manifested at the grammatical levels of language*” (İsmayıl, 2022, p. 10). This position provides grounds for regarding syntactic implicitness as an interpretative phenomenon that enables a broader semantic content to be derived from an overt structure. The communicative function of syntactic structure is also manifested in the fact that the formal properties of a sentence type do not always fully correspond to the communicative meaning conveyed. In discussing rhetorical questions, İsmayıl points to the simultaneous realisation of “two syntactic meanings” in such constructions: “*In rhetorical questions, two syntactic meanings occur simultaneously. A question and a statement are expressed*” (İsmayıl, 2022, p. 10). Syntactic implicitness is not confined to the omission of

a constituent. A number of linguists include, among the specially marked means of creating implicit meaning, not only parcellation but also disruption of the syntactic or logical ordering of utterance components: *“Implicit meaning may be expressed in a text by specially marked devices. These include parcellation as well as disruption of the syntactic or logical ordering of the components of an utterance”* (Anikeeva and Balashova, 2020, p. 185). E. V. Ermakova’s view of implicitness offers a broader perspective on this issue: *“Implicitness is a property of verbal information which actualises for consciousness, and makes perceptible, those relations between units of information that remain latent in other situations, while at the same time creating new relations that linguistic units did not previously possess”* (Ermakova, 2010, p. 21). The reconstructive nature of syntactic implicitness is also related to the integrity of the text. Many linguists emphasise that an individual sentence does not always constitute a complete thought in itself but functions as one predicative link within a broader textual system. Among the principal features of a syntactic whole are *“unity of content, semantic unity, integrity, structural closure and the means of connection emerging in the relationships between components”* (Məmmədli, 2023, p. 3). The distinction between explicit and implicit forms of intratextual connection in A. Rzayeva’s research is also noteworthy in this respect. The author writes: *“Implicit connection refers to a situation in which the content of the idea presented to the reader appears to be concealed within the text, because no formal means are used in expressing that idea; nevertheless, the idea presented in the given text or discourse is understood through the reader’s previously acquired background knowledge or intuition”* (Rzayeva, 2025, p. 17). In the pragmatic analysis of implicit meaning, information derived from context is likewise presented in close connection with syntactic structure. Yusifova’s research notes that in cases of zero anaphora and ellipsis, the referent is not expressed by an overt linguistic form, yet the listener is able to draw an inference on the basis of the context and existing knowledge. Here, syntactic non-expression becomes the starting point for inferential interpretation.

The reconstruction of the unexpressed component is not arbitrary; the preceding part of the text imposes interpretative constraints on the addressee and narrows the range of possible meanings. E. Abdulrahimov’s explanation of the role of presupposition in this process may also be related to syntactic implicitness: *“Information that is not directly mentioned in communication but is understood by the listener as an integral part of it is called presupposition. Presupposition is an extralinguistic factor on which the speaker relies in expressing a thought”* (Abdulrahimov, 2014, p. 69, as cited in Yusifova, 2024, p. 9). Since the speaker assumes that certain information is already known to the addressee, there is no need to express it repeatedly at the syntactic level. Thus, syntactic economy is, on the one hand, a structural phenomenon and, on the other, a pragmatic assumption concerning knowledge shared between the participants in communication.

Results

The analysis shows that syntactic implicitness is not restricted to the omission of sentence constituents but may also arise through non-canonical word order, rhetorical questions, parcellation, ellipsis, zero anaphora and other structurally marked constructions. Implicit content is frequently reconstructed through the interaction of syntactic form with textual context, presupposition and shared background knowledge. The findings also indicate that the interpretative boundaries of implicit meaning may extend beyond an individual sentence, since an unexpressed element can be recovered from preceding or subsequent textual structures.

Conclusion

Implicit meaning verbalised through syntactic means emerges from the interaction between formal structure, textual relations, presupposition, context, and the inferential activity of the addressee. A syntactic construction not only constitutes the overt organisation of an utterance but also determines which information remains unstated, which component is communicatively foregrounded, and which semantic relations must be reconstructed by the addressee. Syntactic implicitness should therefore be

regarded not merely as a property of grammatical form, but as a multi-level phenomenon arising from the interaction between structure and communicative semantics.

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