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Discourse markers as intensifiers of verbal aggression

Abstract

The paper studies discourse markers and their pragmatic potential in the aspect of verbal aggression. Discourse markers are understood as units whose lexical meaning is either lost or significantly weakened, but in the situations of communication they have acquired pragmatic meaning. Such units reflect a certain emotional intention of the speaker, have a great potential and are able to express a wide range of emotions, both positive and negative. In this paper, we examine discourse markers in the Russian language as a means of intensifying verbal aggression, analyzing those contexts where these units were associated with negative emotions. The analysis showed that discourse markers can reflect different shades of negative emotions, as a result of their lexical meaning loss and further transition to the class of pragmaticized units. Consequently, their pragmatic potential as means of verbal aggression is beyond doubt. Verbal aggression prevents performing the major tasks of effective speech communication as it thwarts full information exchange, discourages from adequate perception and mutual understanding and makes it impossible to develop a common interaction strategy. The study of verbal aggression is a necessary condition to ensure communicative security of an individual and society as a whole. Developing effective speech communication skills as well as strategies and tactics to prevent aggression in speech are the primary tasks of modern linguistics.

Keywords: discourse markers, intensifier, pragmaticalization, pragmatic meaning, verbal aggression, functional potential, contextual analysis

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For citation: Putina, O. N., Syutkina, N. P. (2022). Diskursivnye markery kak intensivatory verbal'noy agressii [Discourse markers as intensifiers of verbal aggression]. *Teoreticheskaya i prikladnaya lingvistika* [Theoretical and Applied Linguistics], 8 (4), 120–129. https://doi.org/10.22250/24107190_2022_8_4_120