

Mikhail A. Kravchenko
Rostov State Transport University
Rostov-on-Don, Russian Federation
mak@rgups.ru

***Esli ugodno* 'If you will': A philological sketch for the portrait of a meta-operator (Based on the Russian National Corpus)**

Abstract

This article aims to study the functioning patterns of one of the metacommunicative markers – the meta-operator *esli ugodno* 'if you will' used as an introductory expression in a wide range of metalanguage contexts. This meta-operator fixes the zones of metalanguage tension and acts as a signal of metalanguage reflection. The total of 1864 contexts were selected from the Russian National Corpus and further processed using functional-semantic, functional-pragmatic and contextual analysis. The results show the tendency towards the grammaticalization of the expression. Its transformation from a predicative unit with a modal meaning into an introductory unit is one of the active processes in modern Russian. The meta-operator is characterized by syntactic freedom with respect to the object of reflection. The study enabled to identify 2 main functional and semantic roles of the meta-operator: 1) to mark the communicative tension when choosing a language unit, 2) to comprehend the results of the choice of the sign. In its first function, the meta-operator signals difficulties in choosing a sign being a marker of hesitations, in the second function it appears a marker of the status of the selected sign determined by the direction of communication (signals of fuzzy nomination and explanation), stylistic coloring (a signal of the sign belonging to a particular style), emotional and expressive features (signals of euphemization or dysphemization) as well as linguocreative potential (the signal of the language game).

Keywords: metalanguage reflection, meta-operator, metacommunicative marker, reflexive, functional and semantic role, hesitation, approximator

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