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**COGNITIVE-PRAGMATIC CHARACTERISTICS  
OF THE SPEECH ACT OF APOLOGY**

**КОГНІТИВНО-ПРАГМАТИЧНІ ПІДТИПИ  
МОВЛЕННЄВОГО АКТУ ВИБАЧЕННЯ**

**Burenko T.M.,**

*orcid.org/0000-0002-1486-0373*

*Candidate of Philological Sciences,*

*Associate Professor at the Department of English Philology and Linguodidactics*

*Sumy A.S. Makarenko State Pedagogical University*

**Aleksakhina T.O.,**

*orcid.org/0000-0002-9905-330X*

*Candidate of Philological Sciences,*

*Ph. D. lecturer at the Department of Foreign Languages*

*Sumy State University*

The speech act (SA) apology system consists of two cognitive-pragmatic subtypes – corrective and preventive – and their pragmasemantic variants, selected by semantic and pragmatic parameters, respectively, by mental proposal and illocutionary characteristics.

Pragmasemantic variants of corrective SA of apology are request for apology; nomination of emotional state; justification (argumentation).

An apology is a pragmasemantic variant of SA of apology, which is expressed by a performative formula: “*I ask you to forgive my doing smth bad*”, where *smth* is a previous action.

The emotional state nomination is a pragmasemantic variant of SA of apology, which reflects the speaker's feelings for the harm done to the addressee and is given by a performative formula: *"I feel sorry because I have done smth bad"*, where *smth* is the previous action.

Justification (argumentation) is a pragmasemantic variant of retrospective corrective SA of apology, which corresponds to the performative formula *"I didn't mean to do smth bad"*, where *smth* is a previous action. SA of justification emphasizes the emotional illocutionary component of the hybrid SA of apology.

Clusters (combinations) of several types of corrective SA of apology, presented in separate sentences, are recorded in speech moves, which in the dialogue are determined by the limits of the speech contribution of one speaker. In the English discourse configurations of clusters – combinations of such pragmasemantic types of apology: 1) nomination of emotional state + apology and (2) confession of guilt + apology.

Preventive SA of apology aims to prevent the speaker from feeling guilty. This type of SA of apology corresponds to the performative formula: *"I ask you to pardon me if / when I do smth bad"*, where *smth* is a hypothetical action. Preventive apologies are metacommunicative in nature and are embodied in procedural and ritual speech stereotypes.

**Key words:** apology, corrective SA of apology, SA, pragmasemantic variant, preventive SA of apology.

Система мовленнєвого акту (МА) вибачення складається із двох когнітивно-прагматичних підтипів – корегувального та превентивного – та їх прагмасемантичних різновидів, виділених за семантичними та прагматичними параметрами, відповідно, за ментальною пропозицією та іллокутивними характеристиками.

Прагмасемантичними різновидами корегувальних МА вибачення є прохання про вибачення; номінація емоційного стану; виправдовування (аргументація).

Прохання про вибачення – прагмасемантичний різновид МА вибачення, який виражається перформативною формулою: *"I ask you to forgive my doing smth bad"*, де *smth* – попередня дія.

Номінація емоційного стану – це прагмасемантичний різновид МА вибачення, який відображає переживання мовця за нанесену шкоду адресатові та подається перформативною формулою: *"I feel sorry because I have done smth bad"*, де *smth* – попередня дія.

Виправдовування (аргументація) – прагмасемантичний різновид ретроспективних корегувальних МА вибачення, який відповідає перформативній формулі *"I didn't mean to do smth bad"*, де *smth* – попередня дія. МА виправдовування акцентують емотивну іллокутивну складову частину гібридного МА вибачення.

Кластери (поєднання) декількох різновидів корегувальних МА вибачення, поданих окремими реченнями, зафіксовані у мовленнєвих ходах, що в діалозі визначаються межами мовленнєвого внеску одного мовця. В англійському дискурсі виділяються конфігурації кластерів – поєднань таких прагмасемантичних різновидів вибачення: (1) номінація емоційного стану + прохання про вибачення та (2) визнання провини + прохання про вибачення.

Превентивний МА вибачення має на меті запобігти появі у мовця емоції провини. Такий різновид МА вибачення відповідає перформативній формулі: *"I ask you to pardon me if/when I do smth bad"*, де *smth* – гіпотетична дія. Превентивні вибачення мають метакомунікативний характер і втілюються процедурними й ритуальними мовленнєвими стереотипами.

**Ключові слова:** вибачення, корегувальний МА вибачення, МА, прагмасемантичний різновид, превентивний МА вибачення.

**Introduction.** At present, awareness of various discursive phenomena is impossible without recourse to the cognitive-pragmatic paradigm. This forces us to consider not only the traditional semantic, structural, functional aspects of individual speech actions, but also allows us to reunderstand their cognitive-communicative nature. Special studies of the pragmatics of apology in English [1] and Russian [2] allow us to establish certain characteristics of apology in synchrony and diachrony: to distinguish semantic-functional types of apology and to describe conventional and unconventional apologies in the diachronic aspect. The intercultural perspective of apology research makes it possible to identify its specificity in English, Russian, German, Italian, Polish and Hungarian discourses [1; 3; 2; 4; 5; 6; 7].

The relevance of the study is determined by the sociocultural significance of the phenomenon of forgiveness in speech communication, a new integrated cognitive-pragmatic approach to the analysis of the nature and functioning of forgiveness in English discourse. The **object** of study is the speech

acts (SA) of apology in the English XVI–XXI century discourse. The **aim** of the study is to identify cognitive-pragmatic subtypes – corrective and preventive – and their pragmasemantic variants, selected by semantic and pragmatic parameters, respectively, by mental proposition and illocutionary characteristics.

#### **Presentation of the main research material.**

I. Hoffman sees the semantic specificity of apology in the fact that a person who has committed a malefactive act and admits guilt, as if playing two roles simultaneously: the culprit and the person who condemns himself. There are five types of proposition in the SA of apology: expression of regret, confession of guilt, self-condemnation, promise to correct, offer to compensate the damage [8, p. 144]. In general, it is recognized that apology is a means of purposeful regulation of relations between communicators in accordance with the interests of both participants in communication, but the types of SA of apology still remain uncertain.

**A retrospective corrective apology** is the speaker's reaction to the insult of the addressee. The speaker

admits his guilt and intends to get out of this situation by restoring balance in the relationship with a partner.

Based on the processed material, we distinguish the following pragmasemantic variants of corrective SA of apology – historical constants for the XVI–XXI centuries:

- (1) request for apology;
- (2) nomination of emotional state;
- (3) justification (argumentation).

**Request for apology.** A person who apologizes, thus asks the partner to ignore in future relationships the probable negative consequences of their actions [2, p. 14]. An apology is a pragmasemantic variant of SA that emphasizes the motivating illocutionary component of an apology and is expressed by a performative formula:

*“I ask you to forgive my doing smth bad”*, where *smth* is the previous action.

In this pragmasemantic variant of SA, motivation is most clearly manifested in comparison with other variants [2, p. 62–73]). The most conventional form of linguistic expression of this SA type is speech stereotypes used in accordance with the communicative requirements of a particular sphere of speech [9]; noun and verb clichés are recorded in this variant.

Among the verb constructions that implement SA of apology of this pragmasemantic variant, we distinguish imperative and narrative ones. In our body of examples, most utterances that include verb formulas implement SA of apology in a direct way, i.e. with the help of imperative sentences with the apologetic lexeme *pardon*, *forgive* or *excuse*:

– Mr. Tapman apologizes to his friend:

*And forgive me if I have ever, even in thought, done you the injustice of supposing that you could stand in my way* (Ch. Dickens, The Posthumous Papers of Pickwick Club).

Narrative sentences are characterized by the presence of the verb *pardon* in the future tense, they implement the SA of apology in an indirect way. For example: Lucy apologizes to Polly for her state of mind:

*Lucy. I hope you will pardon my passion, when I was so happy to see you last* (J. Gay, The Beggar’s Opera).

The greater the degree of guilt of the speaker, the more diverse emotional and expressive language tools he uses in SA to focus the content of the statement and increase the impact on the listener. As historical constants in the speech of the XVI–XXI centuries in the pragmasemantic variant of the request for apology, the following lexical markers-intensifiers, which enhance the emotional component of the illocutionary force of SA, function:

– exclamations O, Oh, etc.:

*Trip. Oh, gentlemen, I beg pardon for not showing you out* (R. Sheridan, The School for Scandal);

– emotionally colored vocabulary:

*Cleopatra. O my lord, my lord, Forgive my fearful sails!* (W. Shakespeare, Antonio and Cleopatra).

Strengthening the leading illocution of apology is achieved by using in verb cliché utterances the modal verb *must*, which emphasizes the causality of SA:

*‘Dear Mercy’, he said, ‘you must forgive me’* (Th. Hardy, Tess of the d’Urbervilles).

According to our data, such a modal intensifier is diachronically stable in the speech of the XVI–XXI centuries.

Among the nominal constructions that implement the apology SA in the period of XVI–XXI centuries, elliptical sentences such as *pardon*, etc. are recorded, in which motivation is implied and taken out of the context and situation of discourse, for example, Helena apologizes in a conversation with the Countess:

*Your pardon, noble mistress!* (W. Shakespeare. All’s Well That Ends Well).

According to the addressee parameter, the diachronic invariant of apology usually includes SA, in which the speaker expresses an apology using first person singular pronouns (me, my (fault) etc.), in some cases – plural:

*And pardon us the interruption of thy devotion and right Christian zeal*

(W. Shakespeare, Richard III).

Among our examples, there are isolated cases when the addressee apologizes for a malefactive act of a third person (them), for which he feels moral responsibility. For example, Edward apologizes to his friends:

*Peacey. It’s not the money, I can do without that, but these personalities.*

*Edward. I apologize for them* (H. Granville-Barker, The Voysey Inheritance).

**The nomination of the emotional state** is a pragmasemantic variant of the apology SA, which reflects the painful experience of the speaker for the harm done to the addressee. This SA emphasizes the emotional illocutionary component of forgiveness and corresponds to a performative formula that conveys the emotional experience of sadness, remorse, etc.:

*“I feel sorry because I have done smth bad”*, where *smth* is the previous action.

Nominal clichés of this kind apology usually contain: the adjective *sorry*; noun *pardon*. The *‘I’m sorry’* formula and its elliptical *‘Sorry’* are used as a diachronic constant in the apology SA. The speech acts of apology, implemented by nominal clichés, have

two illocutionary components: the expression of emotional state, given the literal value of *sorry*, and indirectly given the motivation to apologize. The general intention of apology in such cases is recognized without involving context due to the conventional nature that these clichés acquire in speech. The communicative function of such hybrid SAs – apology is realized by regretting that the speaker did something wrong, and is reinforced by the appeal, for example:

– Mr. Tuckle apologizes to Weller for closing the fire on him:

*‘Sorry to keep the fire off you, Weller’ said Mr. Tuckle, with a familiar nod* (Ch. Dickens, The Posthumous Papers of Pickwick Club).

According to our data, apology-regret works with or without appeals, with predicate complements in the infinitive (*sorry to do smth bad*) or in the form of a perfect (*sorry to have done smth bad*), for example, Miss Vernon apologizes to Frank for inadvertently causing his resentment:

*‘You are mortified,’ she continued, ‘and I am sorry’* (W. Scott, Rob Roy);

Lieutenant Tepleton put Mr. Pickwick in a difficult situation:

*‘Sorry to have placed you in this disagreeable situation,’ said Lieutenant Tappleton, addressing Mr. Pickwick* (Ch. Dickens, The Posthumous Papers of Pickwick Club).

**Justification** is a pragmasemantic variant of corrective SA of apology, which can be expressed by a performative formula:

*“I didn’t mean to do smth bad”*, where *smth* is the previous action.

Justification contains a denial of intention to offend or harm the addressee, and therefore this pragmasemantic variant is more mitigating than other forms of apology. Justifications are used in the situations where communicators are mostly in a formal relationship, the damage is not significant, and its consequences are not long-lasting [10]. According to the formula, such apologies are realized only in an indirect way, their meanings are derived from the context and situation. The analysis of our material shows that the apologies of this pragmasemantic variant are indirect implicit SAs, submitted statements that do not contain apology markers, which testifies to their unconventional nature. For example, Sharpener apologizes to Mrs. Brown for his excessive chatter:

*‘Misses Brown’, urged the tormented Grinder, ‘I didn’t mean to’* (Ch. Dickens, Dombey and Son).

According to the structure utterance-justification is negative narrative sentence, where verb with the seed of desire/intention (want, mean) is usu-

ally used exclusively in the first-person singular of the past tense (Past Simple):

*I – I didn’t mean – I mean, I didn’t wish to say you would do any wrong to this dear child* (W. Thackarray, Vanity Fair)

Historically stable in our data are the statements-justifications of the elliptical shape with the omission of the subject or complement:

*Didn’t mean to rout you out* (J. Conrad, The Secret Agent);

*‘I didn’t mean, Ma’am’ – began little Paul* (Ch. Dickens, Dombey and Son).

Among the pragmasemantic variants of the corrective subtype of apology SA, there are cases of combining SAs of several types – individual statements within one discursive move. We consider such cases to be clusters.

The cluster is defined as the result of the imposition of two different typologies (classifications) [11, p. 13]. Our corpus of examples combines the typology of discourse units – SA and speech moves with the typology of apology SA, i.e. their pragmasemantic variants. Clusters (combinations) of types of SA of apology are limited to the speech move, which “corresponds to the concept of replica” and in the dialogue is determined by the limits of the “speech contribution of one speaker” [12, p. 113]. According to our data, in the English discourse of the XVI–XXI centuries cluster configurations stand out as diachronically constant combinations of several pragmasemantic types of apology:

(1) emotional state nomination + request for apology:

*I’m so distracted with a variety of passions, that I don’t know what I do. Forgive me, Madam* (O. Goldsmith, She Stoops to Conquer or, The Mistakes of a Night);

(2) guilt recognition + request for apology:

*I – I am a love-sick idiot, and not accountable for my actions. Will you forgive me – if I say no more?* (H. Wells, Ann Veronica).

**Preventive SA of apology** aims to prevent the speaker from feeling guilty. In this case, the action that is hypothetically capable, according to the speaker, of causing guilt, takes place in the present /future. This type of SA of apology corresponds to the performative formula:

*“I ask you to pardon me if / when I do smth bad”*, where *smth* is the next action.

For speech actions of this kind, the cause of hypothetical guilt is, as a rule, the speaker’s predictable violation of etiquette. Etiquette apologies are related to social norms of behavior in typical communication situations, they indicate a friendly (at least

pretended) attitude to the interlocutor and allow to maintain polite communication. Such speech actions are standard and expected in the process of interaction. Preventive SAs of apology are designed to maintain social harmony in society and characterize the speaker as a polite member of society who follows established rules of etiquette.

Speech stereotypes of apology are procedural and ritual. Among the formulas of linguistic expression of preventive apology SA, we distinguish between nominative and verbal expressions. Nominative apology formulas of this kind in the XVI–XXI centuries contain the adjective *sorry*; noun *pardon*. The most frequent in English speech is the historically unchanged formula ‘*I am sorry*’ and its variants. The communicative function of preventive apology is to prevent the speaker from violating the harmony of communication. For example, Bob apologizes before addressing the bad news to Mrs. Riddle:

‘*I am very sorry, Mrs. Raddle*’, said Bob Sawyer with all imaginable humility, ‘but the fact is, that I have been disappointed in the City today’ (Ch. Dickens, The Posthumous Papers of Pickwick Club).

A distinctive feature of preventive apologies are phrases with the apology seme in the nominal part after the verbs *ask* and *beg*. For example:

*I ask your pardon for what I say: but I think our intimacy, your own desires, and the occasion justify me* (H. Fielding, The History of Tom Jones);

*I beg your pardon, Captain Gills, but you don't happen to see anything particular in me, do you?* (Ch. Dickens, Dombey and Son).

Such examples demonstrate that preventive SA of apology emphasize both illocutionary components of apology – emotional (*I am sorry* etc.) and motivational (*I beg/ask pardon* etc.)

Among the verbal formulas of preventive apologies, we distinguish between imperative and narrative ones. Imperative statements that realize the corresponding SA in a direct way, have a component of apologetic lexemes – verbs *pardon*, *forgive* or *excuse*, for example:

– Caesar apologizes to Septilius for his question: *Caesar [Humbly]. Lucius Septimius, pardon me: why should the slayer of Vercingetorix rebuke the slayer of Pompey?* (B. Shaw, Caesar and Cleopatra);

– Apology for atypical behavior: ... *And forgive me if I suggest, as an excuse for follies I am not usually guilty of, the custom of this house and country* (W. Scott, Rob Roy);

– Dombey is sure that his apology will be accepted: ‘*You will excuse – even you, Major*’, replies Dombey, ‘*my entering into any further detail at present*’ (Ch. Dickens, Dombey and Son).

A typical structural-semantic and pragmatic feature of such SAs is their use as a component of complex speech acts, which include the name of the next action. For example, using a pause in a judge's speech, Mr. Pickwick asks for a few minutes for a confidential conversation:

‘*I beg the magistrate's pardon, but may I request a few minutes' private conversation with him, on a matter of deep importance to himself?*’ (Ch. Dickens, The Posthumous Papers of Pickwick Club).

In this example, the next action (request) is regarded by Pickwick as a certain violation of etiquette, and therefore harms the face of the addressee and therefore requires a preventive apology to the speaker.

**Conclusions.** Thus, MA apologies of the corrective subtype have smaller pragmasemantic varieties, and in apologies of the preventive subtype such varieties are not distinguished. Observations of MA apology in diachronic terms reveal the existence of a historical constant, which forms an invariant of the pragmatic system of apology, and historically variable pragmasemantic varieties – variants. The historical invariant includes corrective and preventive pragmatic subtypes, as well as some pragmasemantic variants of the first one. Further research can be conducted in the direction of the comprehensive analysis of apology units in terms of cognitive linguopragmatics, taking into account the data of sociolinguistics.

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