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SPEECH ACT OF THREAT IN EVERYDAY CONFLICT DISCOURSE: PRODUCTION AND PERCEPTION

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Abstract: The article explores pragmasemantic aspects of the speech act of threat (SAT) in everyday conflict discourse, using examples from Russian colloquial speech. The authors analyze the impact of direct and indirect threats on the addressee from the point of view of the theory of speech acts, biopsychology, and physiology, which makes it possible to understand the nature of SATs and identify the key communicative and semantic factors of this type of speech acts.

Keywords: pragmalinguistics, theory of speech acts, speech act of threat, directive speech act, commissive speech act.

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Résumé

The authors perform a pragmasemantic analysis of the speech act of threat (SAT) in everyday conflict discourse. Special attention is paid to pragmalinguistic, biopsychological, communicative, and semantic effects of direct and indirect threats. Employing methods of linguistic research, the authors describe the main peculiarities of the use of direct and indirect forms of threat in everyday discourse, using segments of Russian feature films as examples. The authors define the speech act of threat as a complex speech act with a binary semantic structure, including the main directive part and the auxiliary commissive part. The data received from biopsychology show that a SAT activates the emotional state of fear, thus affecting the addressee both at the psychological and physiological levels. The authors also identify four main success criteria, common for direct and indirect forms of threat. A detailed analysis of the examples, illustrating the SAT functioning, proves the significance of non-verbal expression of these acts. According to the research, direct threats can be divided into two types: a direct threat with verbalized content elements and a direct threat with non-verbalized content elements. If both elements of the threat proposition are implied, this serves as a marker of an indirect threat, represented by other speech acts. The researchers' analysis has shown that the communicative effectiveness of an indirect form of threat can be as high as that of a direct one. In the context of everyday conflict discourse, direct threats tend to occur more frequently due to their simplicity and effectiveness. However, in cases where the communication environment imposes

certain limits on the communicants (the need to observe etiquette, the possibility of negative consequences for the speaker, etc.), an indirect threat may be more preferable.

Keywords: pragmalinguistics, theory of speech acts, speech act of threat, directive speech act, commissive speech act.

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