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LEXICO-GRAMMATICAL AND PROSODIC VARIABILITY OF PROHIBITION UTTERED BY THE SPEAKERS OF DIFFERENT SOCIO-CULTURAL GROUPS

The article is a complex study of lingual and prosodic means' interplay taking part in expressing prohibition by the speakers of different socio-cultural statuses. Using the method of linguistic interpretation of the auditory analysis, the author comes up with the system of language means of all levels that serve to create a prohibitive effect on the listener. In order to trace the lingual variability of utterances under study, they are classified according to the speaker's and interlocutor's social statuses (high, mid, low), gender (male, female), communicative situation (formal, informal), and the form of prohibition oral actualisation (explicit or implicit). At the stage of auditory analysis, the author singled out prevailing features of lexico-grammatical and prosodic interplay typical of English utterances of prohibition that serves to convey a definite pragmatic orientation (prohibition proper, warning, mocking, or advice), all aimed at drawing listeners' attention and preventing them from doing some sort of action. It is also defined that the involved means (lexico-grammatical and prosodic) realising the act of prohibition, regardless of their explicit or implicit nature, might be characterised by unidirectional functioning that forces the hearer to obey and stop doing the action that does not satisfy or irritates the speaker. The author concludes that the speakers of a high socio-cultural level, as compared to those of a mid one, based on their personal communicative experience, resort to a diverse repertoire of language means that in a more polite manner intensify the communicative-and-pragmatic effect on the recipient.

Keywords: prohibition utterance, lexico-grammatical devices, prosodic means, socio-cultural groups, pragmatic aim, interaction.

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ЛЕКСИКО-ГРАМАТИЧНА Й ПРОСОДИЧНА ВАРІАТИВНІСТЬ МОВЛЕННЄВИХ АКТИВ ЗАБОРОНИ, ВИСЛОВЛЕНИХ ПРЕДСТАВНИКАМИ РІЗНИХ СОЦІОКУЛЬТУРНИХ ГРУП

Статтю присвячено комплексному дослідженню взаємодії лексико-граматичних і просодичних засобів вираження заборони мовцями різного соціокультурного статусу. За результатами застосування методу лінгвістичної інтерпретації результатів аудитивного аналізу участі просодичних та лексико-граматичних засобів вираження заборони, встановлено закономірності їх взаємодії під час актуалізації прагматичного спрямування висловлень заборони. Для визначення особливостей мовної варіативності досліджуваних висловлень, їх було класифіковано за такими критеріями: соціальний статус мовця і співрозмовника (високий, середній, низький), стать (жіноча, чоловіча), комунікативна ситуація (офіційна, неофіційна) та форма актуалізації (експліцитна, імпліцитна). Шляхом аудитивного аналізу було виокремлено провідні просодичні засоби, які диференціюють англійські висловлення заборони за прагматичним спрямуванням на такі, що виражають власне заборону, застереження, насмішку або пораду з метою привернення уваги слухача, щоб не дозволити йому виконати певну дію. Крім того, встановлено, що залучені мовні засоби реалізації заборони, незалежно від форми її вираження (експліцитна чи імпліцитна), характеризуються односпрямованою дією, що має на меті змусити слухача послухатися та припинити дії, які не задовольняють або дратують мовця. З'ясовано, що мовці високого соціокультурного рівня, порівняно із мовцями середнього рівня, на підставі особистого комунікативного досвіду оперують ширшим різноманіттям засобів, які в більш ввічливій формі підсилюють комунікативно-прагматичний вплив на реципієнта.

Ключові слова: висловлення заборони, лексико-граматичні засоби, просодичні засоби, соціокультурні групи, прагматичне спрямування.

Introduction. Among the directive speech acts that are regarded as particular attempts of the speaker to influence the listener fiercely or modestly, and thus make them do some sort of action (Searle, 1975) prohibitions play a significant role in regulating the relationships between interlocutors as they form norms and rules of people's behaviour in society. As a result, the key issue that arises is that of their linguistic meaning in relation to extralinguistic reality that may determine the use of specific means to prohibit something (Tatsenko & Sukhovetska, 2017). Fakhurdinova (2013), in her study adheres to the idea that prohibition is a type of the imperative that expresses unwillingness of some action, or its ban. In other words, this notion might be viewed as a negative imperative, or negative incentive aimed at not performing an action.

Being an important element in all languages, prohibition carries two types of speaker's intention: implicit and explicit (Omar, 2017), that, in its turn, might cause some difficulties with its decoding while requiring effort from the recipient to deduce. The thing is the multiplicity of meanings embedded in the speech act depends on the intention implied, e.g., a wish, regret, rebuke, reproach, and appeal. Since semantic meaning is prevailing over the form, the explanation of language means' use in definite situations should be carried out via application of a semantic model (Tatsenko & Sukhovetska, 2017).

Studying the concept of prohibition, Krainyk (2013) regards it as a verbal reaction of the speaker to the speech act of the hearer, performed or intended to be performed by means of performative verbs, as well as implicit or explicit language means. It is also mentioned that speech acts of this type include the conflict between interlocutors, since one participant's actions contradict the intentions of the other. In general, speech acts of prohibition are characterised by a high degree of definiteness and finality, which is their distinguishing feature. This might be confirmed by their laconic form (Bot & Krasovska, 2021). Apart from this feature, the

scholars highlight the benefit of such statements, saying that prohibitions are physiologically useful for the addressee. Furthermore, as far as the dialogue speech is regarded, the use of prohibitions is conditioned by the interlocutors' age and their social status. In other words, people prohibit something while talking to someone younger or to those who are of lower or inferior social status.

Taking into account cultural differences and their influence on communication, Uyanne and Oti (Uyanne & Oti, 2012) point out the existence of two major ways of delivering messages: messages uttered by interlocutors of a low-context culture and by those who belong to a high-context culture. The low-culture presupposes conveying of the meaning directly, by means of words, whereas high-context communicators tend to express their thoughts often using non-verbal cues. Moreover, they decode the meaning of the uttered message, paying attention to the speaker's nonverbal behaviour, the relationship background, and some general social rules necessary to maintain successful communication. Therefore, in some situations, rather than saying simply 'no', they are likely to use phrases that soften a categorical attitude, perpetuating in such a way the harmony of social interaction.

In view of the foregoing, the **aim** of the undertaken study is to single out distinctive lingual features of prohibitions uttered by the speakers of different socio-cultural and age groups in various communicative situations by way of defining their pragmatic aims that shape the invariant patterns of lexico-grammatical and prosodic mean's interaction.

Methodology. The study of prohibitions as directive speech acts requires a thorough investigation not only of their syntactic representation, but also of the way the pragmatic aim of a speech act is uttered. Searle (Searle, 1989) states the performance of directives in the imperative mood. As an alternative he points out a manifestation of the speaker's intention by uttering performative sentences. The self-referential nature of the sentences is also referred to, as well as the fact that meaning of such types of sentences presupposes encoding the speaker's intention of the action to be performed, being named by the utterance of these very sentences.

In terms of experimental phonetic research, it has become a custom to differentiate emotional utterances according to the following socio-cultural criteria, namely: the communicative situation (formal, informal), the form of expressing prohibition (explicit, implicit), the speaker's and interlocutor's social status (high, mid, low), and gender (male, female) (Kalyta, 2001:208-215; Taranenko & Kutsenko, 2020: 65).

In order to trace the way these criteria influence the prohibitive speech acts as well as to see how people prohibit certain actions to achieve the desired result, we studied prohibitive utterances in the series "The Nanny", since its plot revolves around numerous actions that are prohibited either by the nanny, or by the head of the family. The formed corpus of prohibitive speech acts amounts to 77 English utterances of prohibition, actualised in various situations by the speakers of high, mid, and low socio-cultural statuses.

To reach the objective of our research, it was necessary to complete the following steps: to group the utterances under study into three large classes depending on the speaker's socio-cultural status (high, mid, or low); to further subdivide them according to the mentioned criteria, i.e. whether the utterance is addressed to a listener of an equal, lower or higher socio-cultural level, considering the interlocutors' age and gender; to trace the specificity of lexico-grammatical and prosodic means' interaction while conveying the pragmatic potential of prohibitive utterances.

Results and discussion. As we have mentioned, the notion of prohibition plays an indispensable role in people's communication, showing the desire of one interlocutor not to perform an action by another one. In such a way the first one demonstrates their power and thus subordinates the listener to some extent. It is naturally up to the second interlocutor whether to perform the asked or not.

In view of this, we have carried out an experimental study that proves the direct impact of the speakers' socio-cultural status on realisation of prohibitive speech acts in their both explicit and implicit forms.

The analysis reveals that young adult and middle-aged male speakers of a high social status, regardless of their female interlocutors' social status (here we deal with women of a high and mid social status, who are younger than the speakers or are of the same age), tend to use the so-called mild forms of prohibitions, whose pragmatic function is rather to warn than to forbid something.

Having analysed a set of similar utterances, we found out that even though those prohibitions are expressed explicitly by a typical prohibitive construction 'Do + not + V', they are predominantly aimed at giving the listener a piece of advice, like in the following situation when C.C., one of the main characters, is afraid of losing the man he fell in love with because of a new woman that appeared in his life; C.C. and Mr. Sheffield are more like friends than just business partners that, in its turn, determines the communicative situation as unofficial one: *Oh, C.C., § 'don't be jealous! || Chloe and I might want to take a little walk down memory lane, but you and I will always be business partners* (1), or even mocking as in *→Shh, § 'don't turn around* (2) (uttered in an unofficial situation between two employees late in the evening, when Niles pretends to be Mr. Sheffield, the man C.C. likes). As we can see from the examples, it is typical of the high status speakers to start their prohibitions at a mid or heightened pitch level, utter them with a wavy-like pitch movement (falling-rising (1), falling-rising-falling (2)) within a properly organised rhythm and slowed-down tempo. The imperative structure of the utterances being softened by the wavy-like movement of voice pitch, testifies the speaker's willingness to avoid rudeness, show maximal politeness no matter what was said to the male interlocutor.

The similar might be observed in the prohibitive utterances that express warning. In the situations they are used, the speakers try not to offend the listener as well as simultaneously prevent them from doing some sort of action, for instance: *Miss →Fine, | 'don't make me do this* || (3). The unfolding situation in which two participants, the employees working for the same employer and thus living under the same roof, might be described as a very friendly one, even though Fran's plan is to pretend to be C.C. to get money for the new Mr. Sheffield's play. Of course, Niles, the interlocutor, does not like the idea of helping Fran get into character and consequently he expresses his dissatisfaction. In this utterance, a mid level tone of direct address in the first syntagm is followed by a rather pro-longed pause and a divided high falling-rising tone in the second syntagm expressing a complex feeling of disappointment and irritation. A falling tone of a decreased rate of its movement on the word 'don't' and a low rising tone on the word 'do' make the whole utterance acquire the pragmatic loading of both warning and prohibition.

Apart from the aforementioned, prohibition uttered by the speakers of a high socio-cultural status may be expressed implicitly, indicating their deep annoyance and dissatisfaction, while its form shows the speaker's ability to take control over ongoing situations and thus not to incite the conflict. With the sentence *'Whoops, § | 'time's up. || -Good→bye, 'Nanny 'Fine* || (4) the main character strictly prohibits and even threatens the nanny. Being uttered at worktime, in other words in a formal situation, the message encoded says "stop talking right now". In this utterance the key element expressing is prohibition is 'time's up' pronounced with the rising head on the word 'time's' and a low-falling tone on the word 'up' emphasised with a negative wide pitch interval. However, due to the

high-rising tone on the interjection *Whoops*, a high pre-head and a level tone on the word *Good*→*bye* the whole utterance acquires casual, as-a-matter-of fact sounding as if everything is taking place according to its usual course of action.

The communication between male interlocutors of a high social status is marked by a high degree of politeness on the one hand, and complaisant straightforwardness on the other. The speaker endeavours to abort interfering actions by putting his prohibition mildly, using implicit forms accompanied by corresponding intonation patterns. In an attempt to stop men fighting at the men's club where all successful businessmen are gathered, the main character civilly says: *Gentlemen, please!* (5). The word *please* pronounced with a high-falling tone of a wide range serves in this example not as an amplifier adding force to the prohibition, but also as a verbal marker of an officiality. Similar reaction to the annoying activity might be seen in the situation when the butler is cleaning the windows which squeak and the boss cannot tolerate this sound anymore: *Niles, please, I'm trying to work!* (6). As in the example (5), the word *please* repeats the pattern of the preceding syntagm with direct address uttered with a high-falling tone of a wide range and a slowed down rate of its movement making the whole sentence sound weighty and final. However, in the example (6), the explanation *I'm trying to work* that follows the word *please* intensifies the implicit prohibition proper and turns the utterance into less categorical and more delicate, signifying a decent cultural level and high manners of the speaker.

As is shown by the examples, adult male speakers, depending on the situation and aiming at reaching a quick result from the prohibition uttered, tend to use prohibitions with the formula *do + not + verb*, whose pragmatic aim is straightforward prohibition with some threat. In such a way they make the listener stop their actions immediately, otherwise it might have bad consequences, or when the situation is urgent, like in the following dialogues, where such reprimands are indispensable to prevent from the undesired outcome:

(7) – *You know, I'm really getting the hang of this baseball thing.*

– *Don't toss a ball in the house, sir!*

(8) – *I suppose it's time to have that birds-and-bees talk. Miss Margaret is 14.*

– *Miss Margaret is fourteen. Not Maggie. Oh, Don't even say that!*

The lexico-grammatical structure of both utterances explicitly convey prohibition. However, their prosodic arrangement adds to their semantics the implied pragmatic meaning of warning with a hint of threat. In the example (7) the combination of an emphatic high-falling tone of a wide range on the key-word *don't* and a low-rising tone of a slowed-down rate on the rhythmic unit *house, sir* depicts categorical, however reserved manners of the speaker of a high socio-cultural status. Slowed down tempo of his speech flow, and equal prominence given to each word of the utterance which makes its rhythm be properly organised, signifies that the speaker is irritated but can keep his emotional state and feelings under control, being a distinct feature of the speakers of high socio-cultural level.

The utterance (8) is also characterised by a high degree of emotional and pragmatic potentials. Prosodic means indicate the speaker's irritation, being conveyed by a whole repertoire of emphatic patterns: the mid-high beginning of each intonation group, the use of high-falling tones of the increased rate of their movement, an accidental rise (*fourteen*) and a sliding scale (*Don't even say that*) as well as increased loudness and accelerated tempo of the utterance actualisation. The unidirectional interplay of lexico-grammatical and prosodic means intensifies the speaker's explicit straightforward prohibition turning into the threat.

In a similar manner, men while in a relaxed informal setting are predisposed to express in a friendly manner not only prohibitions proper but also prohibitions containing advice, thus swaying the interlocutors, as in the given examples:

(9) – *You know, I'm really getting the hang of this baseball thing. Don't toss a ball in the house, sir.*

– *→ Niles, don't be such a stick-in-the-mud!*

(10) – *Don't trip over your hormones, sir!*

– *Doorbell chimes. It's alright, Niles. I'll get it.*

The affable manner of prohibiting some actions by giving advice is achieved primarily by the leading role of intonation alongside with lexico-grammatical means based on the same formula *do + not + verb*. The prohibitions are pronounced with a rather playful wavy-like movement of the pitch realised by a broken descending stepping head in (9) (a level-rising-falling-rising-level pattern) and by a descending sliding scale in (10) (a falling-rising-falling-rising-falling-rising movement of voice). In both utterances prosodic means interaction, as opposed to verbal expression, carries the main semantic loading, hence changing the dialogue flow.

As for the female speakers, the ones of mid social status while talking to men of their age or a bit older, incline toward conveying the ideas straightforwardly, without any hesitation and with strong desire to obtain the result. It might be seen in the following example: *Don't give me that look!* (11). The main female character of the series carries on an informal dialogue with a colleague and in an attempt to reassure him and make him go to the theatre despite his strong unwillingness, in such a way gives advice that incorporates prohibition. The utterance is pronounced with the ascending stepping scale where every word is given equal prominence and with the mid-pitched level terminal tone signalling that the speaker is ready to continue expressing her prohibition if it is required. The utterance is also characterised by the regular rhythmic pattern, slowed down tempo and increased loudness which signify the certainty and assertiveness of the female speaker.

We must admit that a significant role in communication of the abovementioned interlocutors plays the type of communicative situation. In the example we have just considered, as well as in the following ones, communicative situations are official, therefore the dialogue between the employee (the speaker) and the employer (the listener) is regulated by a sort of unwritten but worldwide well-established rules required to maintain healthy working conditions. To fulfil the goal, women display the use of interjections “no” and numerous performative verbs, like in the *→No, no! I can't. Stop it!* (12). The utterance being of a high degree of emotional-and-pragmatic potential expresses a categorical and final prohibition. At the prosodic level it is conveyed by short intonation groups pronounced with increased loudness, regular rhythm, contrasted pitch levels: high and mid level tones on the word *→No*; high pre-head on *I* contrasted with the low falling tone on *can't* followed by a high falling tone of slowed down rate of its movement on *Stop*.

In an unofficial situation, on the contrary, the formula *do+not+verb* conveys rather mocking effect. It is explained by a special case when nanny Fran good-naturedly laughs at an elderly man who almost fell down while walking: *Theo, stop! (laughing). Whoops, don't fall!* (13).

It must be noted that in official situations between female interlocutors of different social groups, women of high social status might express prohibitions towards women of mid social status either explicitly, like in *We're going to the park by ourselves. I forbid it!* (14), or implicitly as in *Miss Fine. – Yes. – Get out or I'll hurt you!* (15). In both examples the choice of language means (the use of performative verbs) to impose the speaker's will upon the listener is regulated by the purpose implied as well as the situation

in which it occurs. The speaker and the listener are in tense relationships thus communicate rather formally. In the first utterance we see the prohibition itself, expressed by a performative verb *forbid*, while in the second one the speaker threatens the listener, meaning that the last cannot stay here any longer. The real threat is shown in the second part of the utterance, however, it starts with the phrasal verb *get out* pronounced sharply and categorically, which adds to the general strictness of the message.

The next aspect of women's communication within the frameworks of our study is to investigate the way women of a mid social status (ones of the main characters of the series) interact with each other and as a result prohibit something. In the episodes under study, they appeared in unofficial situations and as representatives of low-context culture spoke frankly, formulated the thoughts directly without much implications, they focused on the immediate result which can be traced via the use of prohibitions with performative verbs like in *So, 'stop 'eating!* (16), *'Shut 'up, 'Marsha!* (17) or *'Bite your 'tongue!* (18). In the two last examples we see the utterances that convey the meaning: *stop talking* or *do not talk much* with the help of exclamatory imperative sentences having the performative verb in their structure. It must be said that the key role in delivering these messages is played by the intonation involved. The utterances are pronounced at a heightened pitch register with increased loudness, giving prominence to each word by a widened tone interval (positive in 16 and 18) and negative in 17) as well as emphatic melodic patterns (ascending stepping head with a high-falling tone in 16, high-level vs low-level tone in 17, and a sliding head in 18). The outlined intonational organisation indicates the inability of the female speakers of the mid socio-cultural level to control their emotions and feelings while expressing prohibition.

Conclusions. Having studied the role of socio-cultural factors in realising the notion of prohibition in the English dialogue speech, we have come to the conclusion that depending on gender, age and socio-cultural status, the set of language means and the ways of expressing prohibitive speech acts can vary. Considering the material under study, there is the prevalence of interlocutors of high and mid social statuses, who are well educated and occupy a certain niche in the society.

In the course of the research it was found out that women of a mid social status may be referred to the people whose characteristic features are those of directness, simplicity in expressing their ideas and quick result orientation. Women of high social status, by contrast, show more flexibility in terms of types of prohibitions and hence of the set of language means for their implementation in speech.

It is a typical feature of prohibitions uttered by female speakers to have emphatic prosodic patterns that accompanies an exclamatory imperative sentence with expressive lexical units that convey explicit prohibition. Such utterances are rather short, do not have any pauses within, are of a regular rhythmic pattern due every notional word being given prominence either by a special rise, a sliding head, a high falling of high level tone, widened pitch intervals at the junction of each word, and increased loudness. Thus, the interaction of prosodic and lexico-grammatical means serves to highlight the warning or a threat of the prohibition uttered by a woman.

Referring to the men in the series, they belong to the people of a high social status what determines types of prohibitive utterances preferred by them (prohibitions proper, advice or warnings), their form and ultimately language means, are often the ones that sound polite, express implicit prohibition aimed, on the one hand, at banning from some actions, and saving good relationships with the interlocutor, on the other. The reason for this might lie in the individual worldview reinforced by personal conviction that despite prohibiting something, successful communication should remain polite and well-behaved. Hence such an attitude is reflected in the choice of language means that convey prohibitive meanings of the uttered phrases or sentences subtly, as well in the corresponding intonation patterns, characterised by mid or heightened pitch level at the beginning of the prohibition and a wavy-like movement of the voice pitch that signals about speaker's willingness to preserve a good tone of the dialogue.

The results of the auditory analysis prove that the invariant intonation model of prohibitive utterances proper whose pragmatic orientation is to prevent the listener from certain deeds, and their lexico-grammatical structure contains *do + not + performative verb* comprises the following intonation components: low level pre-head, mid pitch level of the utterance beginning and low level on its ending, widened and voice range, the predominance of a wavy-like melodic contour, high-falling or low-rising nuclear tone with a slowed-down rate of its movement, moderate tempo and loudness, regular rhythm.

The unidirectional interplay of lexico-grammatical means and contrasted parameters of prosodic subsystems favours the attraction of the listener's attention to the utterance pragmatic aim and the speaker's emotional state and feelings.

The prospect of further research lies in defining the scope of means used by male and female speakers while addressing prohibitions to children, as well as the study of the ways of expressing prohibition in children's communication, taking into account individual's worldview, their place in the society in general and in the very communicative situation in particular.

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