International communication of the Ancient Russian state (pragmalinguistic aspect)

Elen Murugova[1], *Galina* Matveeva[1], and *George* Myasischev[1,*]

[1]Don State University, 1, Gagarin, 344022, Rostov-on-Don, Russia

Abstract. The article deals with studying business communication between the City of Novgorod and the Hanseatic League. The "Methods and study" section provides a detailed theoretical description of the linguistic personality of a diplomat of the 13-15th centuries. The main methods and directions of study and reconstruction of the personality under study are substantiated. The "Results and Discussion" section describes an experiment conducted on the basis of pragmatic linguistics and its results. Using some documents of the 13-15th centuries as the background, we have reconstructed the speech image of a medieval diplomat, the author of international birchbarks. The reconstruction was made as per the methods of pragmatic linguistics. The method is based on comparing some specific syntactic unities and uses of grammar forms throughout the entire body of the analyzed documents. The description of the reconstructed image of the diplomat has enabled to draw a conclusion on the preservation of linguistic traditions throughout the entire period of the existence of autonomous city-states and their relationships with the Hanseatic League.

1 Introduction

The historical analysis of business communication by means of some innovative methods of contemporary linguistics facilitates a better understanding of the personal and social nature as well as the nature of the relationships between the people of the bygone eras. It also helps to construct the speech portrait of an official and diplomatic person of the 13-15th centuries and to research the speech tools of interaction of the officials of that time.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the functional linguistic means of the business communication in the Novgorod and Pskov international documents, so-called "birchbarks" (documents written on a piece of birch bark) of the 13-15th centuries basing on the Russian language.

To achieve this goal, the following tasks have been solved:

• description of sources;

• definition of the strategies of the speakers' linguistic interaction ;

• construction of the language portrait of the official of the period under study.

2 Materials and methods

Pragmatic linguistics (pragmalinguistics) is a relatively new direction of linguistics aiming at studying linguistic behaviour in a variety of situations, influences, and also effected by the changing internal psycho-emotional and targeted attitudes. Pragmalinguistics assumes studying

the choice of speech means by the speaker, the official here, to impact his German-speaking counterpart within the framework of international communication.

Since the moment of addressing the subject of "anthropological factor" in the language, pragmalinguistics has played a key part in the study of a communicator`s personality. In international relations, the diplomat personality often plays a most decisive role.

The relationships between the Hanseatic League and Novgorod should be considered not only as a historical but also as the linguistic precedent of the search for mutually effective communication and points of contact. This is especially relevant in today's difficult international environment, where a lot of vital issues of state relations are expressively addressed in the communicative environment.

Pragmalinguistics explores a wide number of issues, namely the attitude of the speaker to what and how they say; speech interpretation by the listener; writer's attitude to the contents, reader's interpretation of the text, etc. The core of pragmalinguistic studies is the theory of the act of speech [1, 2, 3], the standards of speech behaviour [4]. At the same time, the authors` focus falls at a number of concepts as the key categories of pragmalinguistics: "act of communication", "situation", "intention", "impact", "category of the subject", "addressee factor", "functional style", "normative ways of using the language", "choice" [5, 6].

The concept of the choice of language means by the text sender's depending on the situation of communication to impact the recipient is growing vital for the contemporary pragmalinguistics. The category of

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*Corresponding author: georgy-2583@yandex.ru

choice has made it possible to select two directions of research: the functional pragmalinguistics and the hidden one [7].

From the angle of functional pragmalinguistics, the speech activity of the sender of the text is treated in terms of a well-thought and intentional choice of linguistic units in order to effectively influence the recipient. Speech activity is understood as a motivated speech manifestation that depends on the intentions of the text sender. Speech activity contains speech acts, which, in turn, are intentionally determined by the conscious motives of the speaker/writer. Speech act, being a unit of analysis of speech activity, is implemented in text as a choice of statements. Statementы should be understood as a speech means for expressing an intent; a speech unit being equal to the sentence is treated in close correlation with the situation [8].

3 Results

Hidden pragmalinguistics examines the speech of a speaker with his individual set of socio-psychological characteristics, individual life experience and behavioural stereotypes (including their verbal behaviour) and analyses the personality traits of the speaker in their speech [7]. Hidden pragmalinguistics explores the part of the speech system implemented in the form of "subtle nuances of meaning" that manifest themselves as a part of the unconscious verbal behaviour, shaped as speech habits.

When approaching the features of historical documents in terms of language and speech, it is necessary to understand their historical background. Awareness of the conditions and nature of historical processes largely determines the conditions and nature of the sender's linguistic communication, here represented by the spokesman of the state interests of the feudal town on the one hand, and the recipient, a collective feudal union. The relationships of history and linguistics, according to V.L. Yanin [9], allow us to take objectively into account some factors that influence the creation of texts and their significance for both parties of communication.

The historical personality of the public figure-diplomat being a linguistic person in the historical and linguistic study may only be considered as a representation of the cumulative features of the verbal and intellectual activity of the society or its significant social groups. It is obvious that the perfected image of the linguistic personality is created by linguistic culturology, for which a linguistic personality is "the basic national cultural prototype of the carrier of a particular language, a kind of "semantic identikit" [10].

In other words, the primary material substratum of the language is an individual speech-thought, speech-generating and speech-motivating human activity, consolidated along the uniformity of principles and approaches in the society. Baudouin de Courtenay believed that the study of individuals casts light on the historical changes in the language in general [11]. Thus,

taking into account the factor of the psychological component of a language and the ability of an individual to express the linguopsychological processes of a society or a group of persons may be used when studying a historical language personality.

According to A.A. Pushkin, an authoritarian discourse, regardless of its type, is subject to some social disparities in the communicants' positions by emphasizing social conditioning of using the language type [12].

In the works by G. G. Shpet, the internal integrity of a subject using a language is explained by their exclusive "inner form", defined as "linguistic intuition" [13]; the linguistic person here is "the subject in need of logically verbalizing their thoughts and desires and having enough verbal means for such verbalization" [13]. Thus, the objectification of a linguistic person being a social and cultural entity in their objective integrity is "a member of a more encompassing whole — the objective cultural consciousness". The linguistic person gets objectified in the context of historical and cultural ethnogenesis. The objectification of the subject naturally takes place in the texts created in the historical process, and in the general individual verbal creativity in the synchronic process. In other words, the only source that makes it possible to trace the path of development of the historical language personality as a subject is analyzing a text. The authors note that G.G. Shpet, speaking of the "ontology of the soul" in the acts of semiosis, is only right for a case where the language game that takes place in direct and mediated communication in the society is included in the anthology.

Being multi-faceted and possessing a variety of social incarnations, the linguistic personality of the diplomat is objectified in public speech recorded in texts of a different nature. Based on the foregoing, the linguistic personality may be defined as the hypostasis of a specific cultural and social subject (human being), ensured by the presence of their ability of full-fledged speech-thinking activity, which allows to fully realize their creative potential. Self-linguistic ability, in other terms, "linguistic intuition" (V. von Humboldt [14]), "instinct of language" (I. A. Baudouin de Courtenay [11]) is the main condition of self-actualization of a linguistic personality, the self-actualization that consists in using language ability.

The overall objective of rhetoric and pragmatics is searching for the criteria of proper and effective speech, therefore the basis for the modelling of linguistic identity here are speech "qualities", (communicative and visual). This, with the adequate level of culture of the individual's speech, should be identified and developed by the language person in the act of speaking, speech perception, speech interaction, and mutual understanding. Considering that the Russian historical linguistic personality in the international public discourse was initially in the sphere of attention of these disciplines (as the development of office work and eloquence in Russia is inextricably linked with the Byzantine tradition already existing at that time. And the basic rules of rhetoric were brought to Russia along with the Christian cultural environment), the development of

the normalized speech of the diplomat is an objective historical fact that coincides with the development of eloquence, style, and culture of speech in the Russian language.

The main qualities of normalized speech were constantly improved, modified, revaluated in the course of the historical and cultural development of the diplomatic language. This is even more evident in the development of the principles of rhetoric proper, initially formed as an exemplary image of a rhetorician (elite) communicative personality and later on subsequently grew to the point where "the modern culture of speech with its fixation on the analysis of the" linguistic taste of the era "considers the idea of a communicative personality in connection with the social differentiation of the literary language and draws attention to those factors that contribute to the development of a communicative personality of both elite and non-elite types" [15]. That is why the linguistic personality of the diplomat in the process of formal communication in historical evolution manifests itself in a variety of types that differ both in content and formality which is especially evident when researching international communication over certain important transitory periods of history.

In this regard, a linguistic approach to the modelling of a speaking person is quite applicable [16-18]. Applying optimizing modelling as the main method of neorhetoric allows to reveal the conceptual properties of the phenomenon necessary for solving the practical problem, an objective fixation of the image of the language personality of the diplomat in this case [19-21]. A certain disadvantage of this approach may be its focus on a purely effective speech, also interpreted from different angles, whereas the diplomat's speech may be ineffective, i.e. never reaching the intended goal. Thus, A. K. Mikhalskaya treats efficient communication as effective, influencing, and harmonizing speech [22], while for Y. V. Rozhdestvensky it is the speech featuring novelty, relevance, and correctness [23]. Nevertheless, a diplomat's obvious drive for a rhetorical ideal, i.e. a most effective speech, reveals the main conceptual features of the diplomat of a particular epoch.

Our research is based on the fact that the linguistic personality of the diplomat involved in a public discourse may primarily be considered a speech personality, whose interaction with other personalities was conditioned a priori. This determines the range of the texts analyzed, aimed at the public and professional interaction of individuals in the framework of group and personal communication; this also requires defining the main parameters and factors of communication, highlighted in an interdisciplinary integrated approach to the study of the linguistic personality of the diplomat [24-25].

4 Discussion

Initiating the study of the texts of international communication, it is necessary to describe the body of the texts used and their conceptual features.

The manuscripts of the 13-15th centuries being researched are bilingual and written in the northwestern (Novgorod and Pskov) dialects of the Old Russian language (according to the classification by A.I. Sobolevsky [2] and A.A. Shakhmatov [3]) and on the "Pomorsky" dialect of the Middle High German (T.B. Gerashchenko [4]). A.A. Zaliznyak, basing on the analysis of birch-bark charters and documents of the early epoch, singles out the Novgorod dialect as the most ancient form of the Russian language, indicating that it preserves the trends of the preceding all-Slavic speech culture [5]. Given that the official business language is significantly inert, which is associated with the need to respect the unambiguous interpretation of documents and their logical-linguistic connection to preserve legal uniqueness and continuity [6-7], the texts of the letters are notable for considerable stability and long-time preservation of the norms of the Old Russian language.

In order to obtain some most reliable data, we have conducted an experiment based on some pragmalinguistic methods. The aim of the experiment was to divide analyzed texts into small syntactic groups (SSGs), presented as minimal predicative and modal unities. The presence of stable speech forms due to aforementioned stability of official business documents allows treating these syntactic unities throughout the whole body of texts under study. The texts of 110 birch bark charters at our disposal were divided into SSGs; moreover, it was revealed that the minimum length of one birch bark was 15 SSGs, and the maximum length was 27.

This parameter indicates that the optimal value of a birchbarks of 20 SSGs over the course of three hundred years allowed conveying the content of the basic legal documents that defined international relations. Moreover, the actual subject matter of agreements is expressed by 8-15 SSGs, while the rest of the SSGs relate to standard legal formulas describing the sender and recipient of the text as well as their legal relationship: «Priyekhali posly v Velkiy Novgorod, iz Yur`eva Kord Shtoker, iz Kolyvani Albert Roumor, ratmany. // kak posly ot Rigi, Yur`eva I Kolyvani, ot L`ubeka I vsekh 73 gorodov zamorskikh I na sem pomor`i, // I ot vsekh kouptsov" (charter #288,1434 y.) [9] The total number of analyzed SSGs was 275, regarded as 100%.

In the present study, we have stratified SSGs by their functional characteristics [8] and identified the following regularities.

The choice of speech by the sender is deliberate with the main criteria to maintain some formal and business pattern reflecting the legal and cultural norms of the epoch as well as the content in a most objective unambiguous form: «Poslalъ esmъ k vamъ slougu cvoego Petra, mastera dela kolokolnogo, I vy, soused nashi, posadnikъ, I ratmane, I vse dobryi l`oudi, mastera dobrogo kolokolnogo k namъ prishlite, a tem izdrouzhite namъ" (charter #1040, 1435 y)[9].

The analysis of the SSGs showed that in the communicative interaction by the main features, such as "sender's participation / non-participation in communication", the objectifying (substantive) plan

statement dominates (56%), which is explained by the rigid forms of business documentation. Such statements are traditionally based on the model of "actor + action" («nemets priekhali"; «kouptsam pout` svobodny"; «kouptsam ekhat` vodoyu, zemleyu, goroyu" ets.). Secondarily, here comes a personal plan (37%), which is mainly represented by a specific indication of the source of legal relations or information on the "Sender + speech / attitude to the object of agreement" model («nelyub`e mne knyazyu velikomu Velikogo Novagoroda // ili Novugorodu // ili budet mirъ nelyubъ"; «Arkhiepiskopъ Novugorodski i Pskovski blagoslove" [9])

The social plan is represented with some episodic appeals on behalf of the city as a legal status entity, i.e. collective feudal lord in legal relations of the time («A Velikomu Novogorodu l`yubo byst`") and makes up 7% of the total number of SSGs.

One may definitely note the exceptional confidence of the sender of the text in using speech forms. All of the SSGs are shaped as clear statements, containing clear indication at actions or obligations to act: «I nemtsy rouku vzali u posadnika, tysatskogo i starost koupecheskih // v tom, chto nemetskomu kouptsu priezzhat`//, i chto imet` yemou chistyi pout` v Veliki Novgorod// priezzhat` i otezzhat`, po staromu krestnomu tselovaniyu i krestnym gramotam,// i na sey routse, bez hitrosti". This example proves that the nature of the concluded agreement (the oath «na routse") involves a direct and unambiguous action of said side.

The probabilistic assessment as the speech strategy of communicative interaction in birch bark letters is the relationship between the actual and unrealized plans of events. Here unrealized plans implying opportunities, commitments, affordability, permissibility dominate: «A posla pout` svoboden"; «I Velikomu Novgorodu blyusti nemtsa v svoyey zemle, kak svoyego novgorodsa" ets. Such SSGs constitute 71% of the total amount of SSGs. The remaining SSGs relate to actual events: "Poslasha master nashihъ k nemtsy".

Speech assessment here is represented mainly by neutral utterances, of which a small percentage (11%) can still be referred to positive or negative evaluative utterances. The positive ones (8%) are statements that characterize the recipient of the text; they are mainly represented with the expressions «l`yudi dobrye"; «dobra delatel"; «serdenoe soglasie" etc., i.e. forms aimed at creating positive attitudes on the part of the recipient. It is essential to note that these forms have the nature of a speech pattern, for they are literally repeated in the letters that relate to the entire period under study and feature different contents. The "L`yudi dobrye" act as the recipients of the text, as is in the case of entering into business relations (for example, birch bark # 1078) as in the case of intermediary and controversial relations, where Novgorod or Pskov act as an arbitrator or litigant (for example, birch bark # 66, 69, 70).

Negative expressions are usually found in the birchbark letters that contain claims to the recipient and have the nature of accusations («oblyzhno govorya") or disclosures («tem vorovstvom zhive"). In the analyzed correspondence, negative forms represent provocative speech signals that disclose the Novgorod's decisive mood and extreme discontent (as a rule, in the person of the tysyatsky or posadnik) with the actions of the Hanseatic League. In general, even controversial issues are discussed with neutral expressions.

Emphasizing has the nature of clarifications, limitations of interpretations of the text by the parameters specified by the Sender. Most of these limitations are presented with repetitions («Da iz-za tyazhby s pskovochami novgorodskih gostey ne zaderzhivat`, a iz-za tyazhby s novgorodsami pskovskih gostey ne zaderzhivat`"[9]), "stringing" constructs within SSGs («a knyazyu magistru i yego komturam, chestnym l`yudyam, v svoih zemlyah i v svoih gorodah bl`yusti novgorodsa"). The percentage of such SSGs is rather large, compared to the total number of SSGs in the birchbarks amounting up to 48%.

5 Conclusions

The described analysis allows us to shape up the image of an administrative and diplomatic figure of the Middle Ages that represents the interests of the collective feudal lord, i.e. the cities of Novgorod and Pskov. The predominance of objectification, confident behavior, unrealized (due) plans of statements, neutral statements and the largely accentuated speech behavior speak for the restrained behavior of the speaker. The originator of birchbarks is inclined to express his need in certain actions he expects the recipient, to perceive the recipient neutrally, without showing emotions, but capable of expressing the emotional characteristics of the recipient to provoke certain actions from them, should this match certain specific external circumstances. The speaker also seeks to specify the content of his message and deliberately limit the possibility of its being interpreted by the recipient in the manner required by the Sender. The analysis has also showed that the nature of correspondence and speech formulas remains almost unchanged throughout the 13-15th centuries, which speaks for certain linguistic traditions in diplomatic correspondence over the entire period of existence of the autonomous cities - states in their relationship with the Hanseatic League.

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