

## Adresse Communicative Tactics in Speech Omissions

<sup>1</sup>*Gulzhan Amangeldinovna Tezekbayeva,*

<sup>2</sup>*Gulsum Kenzhebekovna Abzuldinova and <sup>2</sup>Kul'bayeva Baglan Tasbulatovna*

<sup>1</sup>Ekibastuz Technical Engineering Institute named after acad.

K.Satpayev, Ekibastuz, Kazakhstan

<sup>2</sup>Pavlodar State Pedagogical Institute, Pavlodar, Kazakhstan

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**Abstract:** The article discusses various tactics chosen by an addressee as a reaction to the omissions in communicative partner's speech. The main focus is on a comparative analysis of communicative situations in English and Russian dialogue speech; we also pay attention to the traditions of English and Russian communicative cultures, the functioning of verbal behavior national and cultural patterns.

**Key words:** Addressee % Speaking % Speech act % Speech tactics % Saying % Speech omissions % Information understatement % Interpretation

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### INTRODUCTION

The central idea of our work was to study the pragmatic features of speech omissions in English and Russian languages. We examined the nature and signs of omission, its types in questions in relation to the communicative intent of the speaker, we also analyzed the interpretation nuances of the addressee's reticence.

Omission is viewed as a reticence, the deliberate understatement. In the Explanatory Dictionary, edited by D.N. Ushakov, speech omission is defined as "an incomplete statement, reticence in the speech of something significant" [1].

The essential feature of omission is understatement, giving only a part instead of the whole amount of information. The prefixes "under-, mis-" in the words of **understatement**, **misunderstanding**, **misinterpretation** stress the idea of incompleteness of process or action. On various pragmatic reasons the omitted part is often the most significant part of information from the point of view of the speaker. R.G. Nazirov described this peculiar feature of omission the following way: "Omission reflects the heightened emotionality of speech and mobilizes the contextual reader's imagination... omission does not create a mystery, but it is a tool for emphasizing of what is not explicitly stated" [2].

In our opinion, the next very important feature of omission is the speaker's communicative intent to conceal a part of information. Content analysis shows that any speech omission is divided into two parts: basic or verbalized part and an omitted or non-verbalized part. The basic part allows the addressee, with some degree of confidence, to recover an omitted part. The basic part may be presented either in one word (an auxiliary word) or in a few sentences. But the degree of addressee's confidence in reconstructing the missing information does not always depend on the amount of verbalized part: one should not ignore the psycholinguistic mechanisms of forecasting information.

Omissions are divided into intentional or arbitrary and unintentional or involuntary. By the former we understand utterances in which the speaker has a definite communicative intention to skip some information or parts of it. In the statements of the second type – unintentional omission – reticence is made due to other pragmatic conditions.

Speech omissions are successfully used in situations where direct discussion is difficult because of the circumstances, for example, the presence of third parties, confidential information, etc.

Omissions can be seen as one way to achieve emotional tolerance, required for successful communication [3]. The ability to use the speech omission to maintain a harmonious dialogue is a communicative adaptation technique, every "communicative-literate" user should be a master of [4].

The problem of communication techniques has been studied in depth by many researchers, both abroad and in our country [5-8].

The reason for occasional speech omissions may be either a feeling of guilt, or fear, or speaker's confusion, so he can't immediately find the words to explain his actions.

The reason for a deliberate omission tactic is taboo of the topic in the social and cultural context, the ban on discussing it.

Understatements may occur due to the lack of knowledge about what and how to talk to in a particular situation, i.e. due to a lack of communication competence or language competence of the speaker.

Speech omissions may be the result of internal emotional and psychological state of the speaker. V.I. Shakhovskiy describes the relationship between communication and emotion the following way: "In fact, any speech act has an emotional adaptation of communicants to each other" [3].

Another cause of unintentional omission is an idea, which came up during the speech act; it violates the linear flow of speech.

So far we have tried to explain what we have studied about the concept of "omission", defined its main features, types and causes in speech.

The communication partner, facing omissions, selects a few options of verbal behavior: this may be either a verbal tactic of requirement to reconstruct the missing information, or verbal tactic of guessing the missed information, verbal tactic of completing the understatement, speech assistance tactic, speech misunderstanding tactic, the tactic of the requirements of "flat" talk, as well as speech tactic of direct response to unsaid piece of information.

Verbal tactic of requirement to reconstruct the missing information. This tactic is implemented by the speech act requirements (direct or indirect) to build up a missing piece of information.

- 1)- The fact of the matter is that he is not even Tartuffe. Tartuffe, at least, knew what he sought and this one, with his entire mind...
- C Well, what is he doing? Finish your speech, you unfair, horrid man! (Ivan Turgenev, "Rudin").

In this situation, the communicant, Alexandra Pavlovna Lipina, is not trying to substitute omissions by guesses, but simply in categorical imperative form, using the verb in imperative mood, requires Lezhnev to finish his speech.

- 2) The requirement to finish a piece of information may be expressed in an indirect act, formulated as a question:

2a) "I shall go to London first," said Katherine. "I have to see the solicitors, anyway. After that, I shall go abroad, I think."

"Very nice."

"But, of course, first of all -"

"Yes?"

"I must get some clothes." (Agatha Christie "The mystery of the blue train").

- 2b)- Why, on earth, do you need so much? –puzzled Raisa said.

- Oh gosh, Rayushka, when such things are happening – the ingratiating grandmother said – we should be there and stock up.

- Yes, what do you mean by 'such things'? (V. Voinovich, "The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of private Ivan Chonkin").

- 3) A fairly common reaction to the omission when it is presented with auxiliary words – particles or conjunctions – is the repetition of omission's basic part in the question-demand form. The particles and conjunctions are the kind of metatextual inserting in a statement or citation, according to A. Wierzbicka [9]. Therefore, they are often marked with punctuation marks – quotation marks, as "someone else's text".

- 3a) They, in fact, agreed to join the new club, but...

- "But what?" – shouted Avdotyev. – If the automobile were today? Yes? (Mikhail Bulgakov "The Master and Margarita").

- 3b) "The American will be safe with them - yes, I am sure of that. But afterwards –

"Eh? What are you thinking of?" (Agatha Christie "The mystery of the blue train").

Speech tactic of omissions completion. In response to the omission tactic the addressee is often trying to complete the omission himself. Mandatory condition for the completion tactic is the accuracy of knowledge about the omitted part of information. He does not speculate or guess, he knows exactly what his communicative partner keeps back. The named verbal tactic is implemented in two kinds of speech acts (SA) SA of omission completing and SA of "anadiplosis".

#### 1. RA of omission completing

- 1)- " But ... why did you ...?"  
"Leave?" Sirius smiled bitterly and ran his fingers through his long, unkempt hair. "Because I hated the whole lot of them ..." (J.K. Rowling " Harry Potter and the order of the Phoenix").
- 2)- " Well done, Ron! That's really -  
"Unexpected", said George, nodding (JK Rowling "Harry Potter and the order of the Phoenix").

The speaker can't finish the utterance because of the experienced horror, the addressee comes to his rescue and completes the omission, since he is familiar with this situation and understands the feelings, experienced by his partner.

#### 2. Speech act of "anadiplosis"

Sometimes the addressee continues an omission instead of his partner. Anadiplosis is often labeled by repeating of the last words in omission replica by the next speaker in his anadiplosis utterance.

- 1) Knighton still bent assiduously over the desk. Suddenly Van Aldin came to an abrupt halt. He took up his overcoat from the chair where he had thrown it.  
"Are you going out again, sir?"  
"Yes, I'm going round to see my daughter."  
"If Colton's people ring up -"  
"Tell them to go to the devil," said Van Aldin.  
"Very well," said the secretary unemotionally (Agatha Christie \*The mystery of the blue train+).
- 2)- You are with a group ? How many people are there? And, you know, it is hard for the teacher to receive individuals. He prefers to talk...

With the group ? – Ostap guessed. – I was just authorized by the staff to resolve one important question about the meaning of life. ( I. Ilf, Y.Petrov, " The Golden Calf ").

Speech act of guesses. In response to the omission an addressee can formulate a variety of assumptions, guesses that partner qualifies as true, untrue or incorrect.

But – he went on ( Rudin ) – really, I would not have said about Lezhnev, I loved him, loved him as a friend ... but then, due to various misunderstandings ...  
- You broke up?  
- No. But we broke up and parted, it seems forever (Ivan Turgenev, " Rudin").

As it is seen from the above example, Daria Mikhailovna is trying to make up the information, omitted by Rudin. She relies on the part of verbalized statements ("due to various misunderstandings ...") and, guided by the most prevalent in this society interpretations of misunderstandings, that can occur between friends, she puts forward a guess: "You broke up? ". The speech act of guesses is given in the form of an interrogative sentence, which needs confirmation or refutation of the communicant. Rudin denies the guess of Darya Mikhailovna. Daria Mikhailovna knows Rudin just for a short time; consequently, the total fund of knowledge does not allow her to make up the omitted information.

Verbal tactic of "speech assistance". A communication partner may assist his interlocutor, who for some reason is hard or unable to complete his utterance himself. Usually this tactic is used when the omission is inadvertent in nature.

- 1)- Between you and me, – Litvinov continued, without finishing his started speech – we have always been honest and open to each other, I have too much respect for you to cheat on you and I want to prove to you that I am able to appreciate the height and the freedom of your soul and though I ... although, of course ...  
- Gregory Mikhailych, – Tatiana began in a steady voice and her whole face was covered with a livid pallor, – I'll come to your rescue: you no longer love me and do not know how to say it (Ivan Turgenev "Smoke").

On seeing that Litvinov could not finish his speech because of strong emotion, Tatiana makes a return communicative course – she helps him stop an awkward talk, verbalizing her intention in the following words – "I'll come to your rescue".

Speech tactic of misunderstanding. The addressee pretends not to understand what the speaker means. In turn, the speaker uses the omission as a hint, precisely because he knows that the addressee must understand it.

- 1)- "A man who has made as much money as he has could not possibly be a fool," said Olga. "And talking of money –".  
She looked significantly at Krassnine.  
"Eh?"  
"My share, Boris Ivanovich."

With some reluctance, Krassnine handed over two of the notes (Agatha Christie "The mystery of the blue train").

Krassnine pretends not to understand Olga's hint-omission and asks her "Eh?" Then Olga changes her speech tactics of resentment to the tactics of direct conversation and openly states that she means her money share, which has already been agreed upon.

- 2)- By the way, about the trip ...  
What trip?  
- Last week we planned to go to the city. You pretend that you do not remember? Again, you can't because of your work? (V. Makanin "In the first breath").

Speech tactics of misunderstanding, selected by the speaker, is unraveled by his partner ("pretend") and causes criticisms of him.

Speech tactic requirements of "flat talk, straight from the shoulder conversation". The addressee requires an open conversation without any omissions and reticence.

- Let me ... I came to discuss the matter, of course, but we can't do it at a go.  
- Why not?  
- The third person is involved here...  
- What the third person?  
- Sergei Pavlovich, you know what I mean.  
- Dmitry Nikolayevich, I do not understand you at all.  
- As you wish...

- I want you to speak flat, straight from the shoulder! – Volyntsev added (Ivan Turgenev "Rudin").

Verbal tactic of direct response to the omitted piece of information. The addressee does not require the reconstruction of the omitted parts, he does not try to guess them, he directly responds to the omitted content and he quickly reconstructs the concealed part and reacts to it in his response.

- 1) "So you see, Madame, why we are anxious for any information we can possibly get."  
"But surely her maid –"  
"The maid has disappeared."  
"Oh!" Katherine paused to assemble her thoughts (Agatha Christie "The mystery of the blue train").

The detective requires the addressee to help him and to report any information about the murdered. The addressee is trying to say that such assistance would be done best of all by the servant of a murdered woman. The detective, having correctly decoded the implied message, responds directly to this hidden message: "The maid is gone, she can't help. You only should help".

- [– Now, madam, you understand that we need all the information.  
But her maid ...  
The maid is gone].

- 2)- You are the bride.  
- Oh, my God, I know! Then, get out soon!  
- You do not have to – I went on. – You do not have to ...  
- Yes. What are we doing now then?  
- Are you unhappy?  
- Oh, I do not know! Get out! (A. Green "Running on waves").

High confidence in correct interpretation of the omitted information is the necessary condition for this tactic; it enables to skip such tactics as the requirement to reconstruct the omitted information, its clarification, etc. and to respond directly to the content of the omitted information. It is noteworthy that in English the described above speech tactics of direct response to the omitted part of information is used more proactively compared to

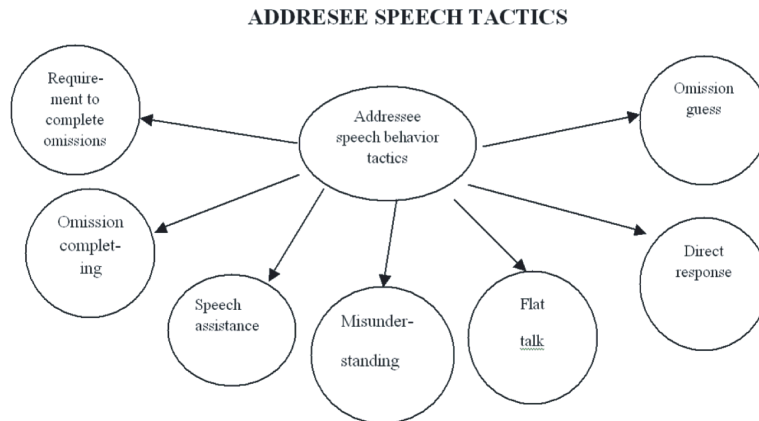


Fig. 1:

the Russian language, by 2.5 times more: 6.2% in Russian and 16% in English (we analyzed 320 omissions in English and 335 omissions respectively in Russian).

Sometimes the addressee reacts negatively to a basic portion of the omitted statements, introduced or finished with a conjunction (sometimes with a particle), but, nevertheless, he interprets them correctly. In reply-utterance the conjunction is necessarily repeated. Reliability and completeness of the interpretation promotes the overall conceptual semantics of auxiliary words – the semantics may be adversative, dividing, concessive, conditional, etc. V.V. Kolesov describes this phenomenon as a result of trends in the development of syntax : "For half a century, researchers have been propagating the opposite movement of Russian syntax – its structure is compressed, cut to word-signs, each of which, having a semantic compression, can be equal to a sentence" [10]. Native speakers knowledge of the concepts is enough to 'target' the omitted part of information and react to it with adequate speech intentions, such as a ban, disagreement with hypothetical modality, " dismissal " of the objection, approval of assertive modality, rebuttal, etc.

This version of the speech tactics is actively used by both Russian and English native speakers in their communicative cultures. Most often they are categorical in nature, but "relaxed" speech acts of addressee are also common.

- 1)- I'm sorry ... Do you want me to go tomorrow and tell him that we are parting forever, or ... – Lena said, guiltily fingering the edge of the tablecloth.
  - Stop the "ors". Tomorrow you will go and tell him that you are not going to see him again any more, never (Vl. Makanin "In the first breath ").

- 2)- You must protect yourself from illness, rather than jumping through the fields on horseback.
  - But ... – Ginny protested.
  - No "but". I forbid you to ride a horse (Agatha Christie \*The mystery of the blue train+).

To sum up we have to stress that within their communicative cultures Russian and English native speakers in response to speech omissions most often use the following speech tactics that can be represented in Figure 1:

It should be noted that Russian speakers are more likely than the British, to choose the tactics of 'flat talk' (12% and 5.7% respectively), which, we believe, can be accounted for the communicative and verbal expression of a particular Russian mentality traits, such as straightforwardness and ingenuousness, a tendency towards openness, flatness, which was marked by many researchers [10-12].

English native speakers in their communicative behavior choose the tactics of direct response, namely 16%, unlike the Russian communicants – 6.2% of all cases. This may be explained by the fact that the English-speaking communicators have better developed a mechanism of understanding, completion and interpretation of the omission of expression.

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