Соотношение микро- и макросоциальных значений в контексте языкового изменения

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The emergent micro-macro social meaning of a sociolinguistic variable: an LVC case in Russian

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Аннотация

Предметом публикации является вопрос о механизмах образования социального значения социопеременной в условиях обыденного ситуативного пользования языком. Теоретической основой исследования служит модель индексальных порядков М. Сильверстайна. На материале данных по языковым оценкам социопеременной в русском языке, полученных с применением ассоциативного эксперимента, показаны три уровня образования социального значения, соответствующих модели.

Abstract

The publication deals with the issue of the emergence and further modification of social meaning as it occurs in everyday social practices. To identify the levels of engagement between a salient linguistic feature and a social object, bringing about differing kinds of social meaning, the data on language attitudes have been analyzed according to M.Silverstein's framework of indexical orders.

Ключевые слова: социальное значение, индексальные уровни, языковые оценки

Keywords: social meaning, indexical order, practices.

The purpose of the publication is to present the stages of evolving social meaning of a phono-morphological variable in the Russian language change - in- progress. The variable comprises of initial and final word-stress patterns and flexional morphology; stress is an acknowledged socially sensitive linguistic area.Traditionally distributed among standard, professional and "common"

language varieties, the non-standard variable forms have been reported to be increasingly used by standard speakers since 1990s.

To investigate a probable change in the social meaning of the variable forms I used the language attitude (LA) data obtained for the LVC project on stress. Experimental data briefly: a series of 42 stimuli/ 20 nouns; 199 respondents of 3 age-groups (8-17, 25-55, 55-70); basic and higher education; several occupation types; 2363 evaluative associations. Respondents' evaluative associations were elicited by applying Free Association Test, a psycholinguistic method providing respondents' spontaneous and interactive mode of behaviour (Gulida 2014). The data came out shaped mostly as speech acts or discursive segments and were representative of everyday local practices, with social meaning instantiated as part of the process.

Among theoretical frameworks suggested by sociolinguists to capture the process of social meaning making, W. Labov's distinction between *indicators*(linguistic features, characterizing a group of speakers), *markers* (the evaluated linguistic features, capable of being used stylistically, as well as introducing style as a language idiom) and *stereotypes* (the linguistic elements that speakers are fully aware of, and discuss within their own and surrounding speech communities) was the first (Labov 1963). This social meaning paradigm has been elaborated later by Irvine and Gal, enriched by the concept of an indexical field (Eckert 2001), and substantiated anthropologically in M. Silverstein's (2003) indexical order I,II,III model, which makes the basis for my data analysis.

Indexical order I

1. dogovorA (contracts)	*At mum's workplace*
2. iskrA (spark)	*Auto repairs*
3. barzhA (barge)	*Grandpa…*

The right - hand associations given by respondents to the left-hand stimuli of non-standard word stress patterns (*A* stands for stressed vowel) are evoking 1. a social setting one heard a stimulus in 2.a workshop where it was typically used or 3.a person one got to know the word from. All of these are mere contextualizations of a variable form, without evaluating it, which places the engagement of the linguistic form with the social object within the first indexical order.

Indexical order II

4. slEsary (fitters)	*the Dahl dictionary*
5. sveklA (beetroot)	*"Common" language. Ancient*

4. The *Dahl dictionary* (slovar' D.) is the rightsetting for a standard word form (here *slEsari)* but there is more to the phrase: an association with the name of the authority in dictionary business (Dahl) suggests culture, "knowing the world", and the ironic appreciation of an unexpected standard variant, adds meta-content to indexing its meaning.

5. The association for 5 is a folk metalanguage to qualify the non-standard form and indicate a higher evaluative position. With a respectful attribute a*ncient* added to the response, an element of (folk) ideology is involved in the

evaluation, creating meta-content, index II, which reads "common (language) is good because it is ancient".

Language play

6.slesaryA (fitters)	muzhikA (plural of muzhik)
7. aeroportY	Airpants
8. dogovorA (contracts)	Furs Enko (former Minister of Education proper name, FUrsenko)

6. The distorted word right hand form muzhikA, mocking the logic of the stimulus is certainly evaluative, to show us how ugly the non-standard stimulus is. It is done within the language play "style", equivalent to a new context to express one's LA. Quite a few respondents resorted to this kind of language behaviour to express their language attitudes. The language play mode could probably count as enregisterment, in Silverstein's model.

7. The next is a simpler case, making use of a linguistic operation of separating the end part portY which means "pants" in old Russian, to make fun of the wrong stress placement in it. One is fully aware of both the linguistic elements and the social message made.

8. The shifted word stress in the former Minister of Education name creates a (new) context imbued with political connotations, and the memories of the person criticized in his time, thus suggesting an image of a faulty Minister, an ineffective authority "up there". At this point the word FursEnko is prone to acquire a symbolic meaning, i.e. engage with index III.

Indexical order III

Stereotypes - in - the - making

10. buxgalterA (bookkeepers)	Fat old girls 50 plus Fat old aunties 50 plus
11. slEsary (fitters)	Neat and sober. Never saw'em like that …
12. liftY (lifts)	"Soviet Housemanager" Sovok… Oophe!

10. "Fat old aunties 50-plus\ Fat typically Soviet old girls 50-plus",
an association for buxgalterA offered by 5 respondents between 30-40 years of age, with implicitly negative semiotics, suggests a "stereotype - in – the-making". The "old girls" as the familiar part of community social scenery of the 1990s, yet showing distinct signs of the new life, with its small businesses, tiny financial departments and the bookkeepers proud of their new status, make a salient social object marked by an innovating variable word stress.

11. The response to standard form slEsary, a stylized pensive mini-narrative, presents an ironic, indeed grotesque re-evaluation of a familiar stereotypical figure of an ever tipsy man, responsible for water supply for a block of flats and habitually referred to by a collective non-standard slesaryA, as the next order (anti)stereotype.

12. A non-standard lift Y is readily associated with a "Soviet housemanager", a person in charge of a multi-storied block of flats. A familiar community type, with no university education yet very important for the 2000 residents of a block, he is a social object of strong

social feeling – critical, yet solidary, and joking, too. The icon of the Soviet times, this persona is undergoing a fast re-evaluation, indeed, re-conceptualization with our respondent age groups: while a mere (neutral) professional name for a person of 70, the man becomes a negative index of the Soviet-type domestic culture for respondents of 30-55, while the young would tend to shorten any word combination, containing attribute Soviet to Sovokto markthings as backward, ofpoor quality and low-prestige. The political part of its meaning is lost upon the youngest: the two 9 year-olds could not remember the "full word for sovok". They use it as an expressive lexeme with a vaguely political and strongly negative meaning to extend on other contexts and social personae. In this way once microsocial meaning is getting generalized towards its respective macrocategory.

To conclude, this use of the word by the "grandchidren" generation seems the case for Silverstein's n-th step of indexical chain to start the 1st order cycle anew (Bell 2014).

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