

COMMENTARY AS A TYPE OF COMMUNICATIVE ACTION

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Abstract. The present paper deals with the problem of a commentary as a secondary communicative action. The aim of the article is to describe several discourse types of commentary (a commentary in everyday oral communication, a scientific discourse, a commentary in a legal communication, a commentary in a religious discourse) and define its current discursive features. As a result of the study, it was found that a commentary in everyday oral communication mostly expresses specification of the previous phrase and personal standpoint of interlocutors. In a scientific discourse a commentary is used to ground the author's approach to the problem and to express a critical evaluation of the problems, usually in a regardful mode. A commentary in a legal communication is given to define and specify certain relevant notions in the sphere of law. A commentary in a religious discourse is used to interpret the basic sentences. A network discourse commentary expresses a personal evaluative attitude to the information published, and responses to it make a polemic dialogue. The scientific novelty of the study is that the definite features of the four types of the commentary are revealed. The study of commentary contributes to the development of theory of speech genres, theory of text and discourse, and pragmalinguistics.

Keywords: commentary, communication, speech act, type, discourse, interpretation, evaluation, polemic

Basic provisions

The study of communicative acts is at the forefront of the attention of researchers exploring issues in linguophilosophy, pragmalinguistics, and theory of speech genres. Philosophically and pedagogically, communicative action represents a type of social action and correlates with teleological, ritual, and dramaturgical verbal and non-verbal behavior (T.A. Kulgil'dinova, V.A. Mityagina, J. Habermas) [1; 2; 3]. From a pragmalinguistic perspective, the conditions, participants, and stages of this communicative event are examined (P. Grice, A.A. Romanov, K.M. Shilikina) [4; 5; 6]. In terms of speech genres, cultural-situational and textually-typical characteristics of corresponding communicative acts are analyzed (V.V. Dementyev, V.P. Moskvina, T.V. Shmeleva) [7; 8; 9].

Introduction

A commentary is a certain metatext related to the original text, its purpose is to specify some information, remove the possible uncertainty of the data being conveyed, and, in some cases, to express one's critical approach to the preceding message.

The aim of the article is to describe some of the discursive types of commentaries (everyday, scientific, legal, religious, online) and to identify their certain discursive specificity.

A commentary is one of the types of communicative action, a text that explains, specifies, and explicates another text.

This type of speech acts is secondary by principle [10], it may be found in different discourse types and, accordingly, it has its own discursive peculiarity.

Methods and materials

To achieve the stated goal, the following methods are used: descriptive method, the method of discourse analysis, contextual analysis, interpretative analysis. Commentaries to scientific, legal and religious texts, and those found in the network discourse serve as the research material.

Results and discussion

In colloquial oral discourse, a commentary represents the elaboration of the message's theme in dialogical or monological forms.

Летом поедem в Анапу. – Хорошее дело! Кстати, у меня там родственники живут, могу дать их телефон.

(We're going to Anapa this summer. – That's nice! By the way, my relatives live there, I can give you their phone number).

Мне недавно Максим позвонил, я тебе о нем говорил, это мой одноклассник.

(Maxim has called me recently, I've told you about him, he is my classmate).

Ты говорил, что нам идти не более 15 минут, похоже, мы не туда пошли.

(You said it was a 15-minute walk, it looks like we've lost our way).

Comments in scientific discourse deserve attention. The following types of scientific comments can be distinguished in the book of the renowned Russian linguist Yu.S. Stepanov:

...внешние формы жизни определенным образом упорядочены, ... они образуют системы, эти системы еще и до некоторой степени аналогичны системе языка. Наиболее четко эта идея была сформулирована именно лингвистами: «Совокупность обычаев какого-либо народа всегда отмечена особым стилем. Обычаи образуют системы. Я убежден, что эти системы не существуют в неограниченном количестве и что человеческие общества, подобно отдельным людям, никогда не создают чего-то абсолютно нового, но лишь составляют некоторые комбинации из идеального набора возможностей, которые можно исчислить», – писал в 1943 году датский лингвист В. Брэндаль. Хотя с мыслью В. Брэндаля об историческом творчестве, как и с его пониманием языка, может быть, и нельзя полностью согласиться, но его рассуждения об аналогии между системой обычаев и языком, причем языком высоко формальным («исчислением»), весьма примечательны [11, с. 9-10].

(Outer life forms are aligned with certain specificity, ... they form systems, and those systems are somewhat analogous to the system of language. The brightest formulation of this idea belongs to linguists: "A certain nation's traditions are always marked with a specific style. Traditions form systems. I am certain that those systems are not unlimited, and that human societies, similarly to individuals, never

create anything absolutely new, but simply make combinations of the ideal collection of countable possibilities” – wrote V. Brendal, a Danish linguist, in 1943. Although V. Brendal’s idea of historical creativity, as well as his understanding of language, might not be entirely true, his thoughts on the analogy between a system of traditions and a language – a language which is highly formal (“calculus”) – are noteworthy [11, p. 9-10].

In this example, one can observe comments in the following varieties: 1) a quotation that the author cites as confirmation of the correctness of their observations, referring to a colleague's opinion; 2) evaluative-modal remark on the cited quotation (partial agreement with the expressed thesis); 3) clarification of terminology ("highly formal language - calculus").

Comments in scientific discourse form a system of comprehensive scientific knowledge, in which the concepts of various scholars and interpreted facts create a cohesive multidimensional informational field. It is worth noting the tonality of the evaluative-modal commentary: the modal combination "может быть" (maybe) and the concessive grammatical construction "хотя... но" (although... but). However, such respectful tonality in scientific polemics always carries an individually-personal character, firstly, and reflects the communicative style of the era, secondly.

V.B. Schlovsky’s recognizable communicative style is of interest:

Я пытаюсь показать — бессмертие искусства в том, что существует связь; нет, не так — я разыщу прямые — не следы — опоры арок «Чайки», озера Чайки, театра, который стоял около озера, — Треплева, его матери — с драмой Шекспира «Гамлет» [12, с. 20].

(I strive to show – the immortality of art lies in its connectivity; no, that is incorrect – I will find exact – not traces, but pillars of “Seagull” arcs, the lake of “Seagull”, the theatre by the lake, - of Treplev and his mother – in the Shakespearian drama “Hamlet”).

The key moment in the provided statement is the commentary "нет, не так" which serves as a clarifying negation, an autocorrection, followed by an apophatic definition "не следы – опоры арок". This text represents a special genre of scientific journalism in which various themes of literary works are thematically examined, and the author's personal attitude towards the discussed issues is prominently emphasized in a publicist manner.

The accentuated polemical nature is evident in the scientific discourse of A.F. Losev (the book "Dialectics of Myth" was written in 1930, the author was arrested because the book did not pass the necessary censorship, the publication was confiscated, and the first reprint of the book was released in 1990).

Настоящее небольшое исследование имеет своим предметом одну из самых темных областей человеческого сознания, которой раньше занимались главным образом богословы или этнографы. Те и другие достаточно оскандалились, чтобы теперь могла идти речь о вскрытии существа мифа богословскими или этнографическими методами. И не в том беда, что богословы – мистики и этнографы – эмпирики (большую частью богословы весьма плохие мистики, пытаясь заигрывать с наукой и мечтая стать полными позитивистами, а этнографы – увы! – часто очень плохие эмпирики,

находясь в цепях той или другой произвольной и бессознательной метафизической теории) [13, с. 33].

(The subject of this limited study is one of the darkest spheres of human mind, which was previously researched by, primarily, theologians or ethnographers. Both were quite scandalous, and this does not allow for using theological or ethnographic methods to dissect the essence of a myth nowadays. The catastrophe does not lie in the fact that theologians are mystics and ethnographers are empiricists (mostly, theologians are poor mystics who try and play with the science, hoping to become positivists in the full meaning, while ethnographers – alas! – are often quite poor empiricists who are enchained by one or another random and mindless metaphysical theory).

The author sharply criticizes myth researchers, reproaching theologians for claiming mystical understanding of narratives, labeling them as poor mystics, and ethnographers, who are supposed to present facts, for thinking schematically. The communicative style of the commentary reflects the rhetoric of fierce ideological struggle characteristic of that era.

Legal commentaries provide a clarifying interpretation of certain legal norms. Let us provide an example of a commentary on Article 5 of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation "Обычай (Customs)" (Commentary on the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, Part One, dated November 30, 1994, No. 51-FZ):

Обычай – это сложившееся и широко применяемое в какой-либо области предпринимательской или иной деятельности, не предусмотренное законодательством правило поведения, независимо от того, зафиксировано ли оно в каком-либо документе.

Обычай включает в себя обыкновения, заведенный порядок, обычно предъявляемые требования и т.п.

Обыкновение – это условие договора, которое не отражено в тексте договора, но в силу соглашения сторон признается обычным поведением в конкретной ситуации.

Заведенный порядок позволяет разрешать споры в соответствии с выработанными сторонами правилами, хотя и не всегда становится обычаем или деловым обыкновением.

Обычно предъявляемые требования формируются применительно к качеству товаров, работ или услуг.

Обычай есть ни что иное, как правило поведения, т.е. образ действий людей в той или иной ситуации. Сформированность как критерий рассматриваемого понятия свидетельствует о том, что к данной модели поведения субъекты обращались неоднократно. Таким образом, сложившийся обычай является правилом поведения выработанной на основе традиций разрешения определенных ситуаций (<https://docs.cntd.ru/document/420387827>).

(A custom is a well-established and widely practiced rule of behavior in a particular area of entrepreneurial or other activities, not provided for by legislation, regardless of whether it is recorded in any document.

A custom includes habitudes, established practices, usually demanded requirements, and so on.

A habitude is a condition of a contract that is not reflected in the text of the contract but is recognized as customary behavior in a specific situation by agreement of the parties.

Established practice allows disputes to be resolved in accordance with rules developed by the parties, although it does not always become a custom or business practice.

Usually demanded requirements are formed with respect to the quality of goods, works, or services.

Custom is nothing but a rule of behavior, i.e., a pattern of actions of people in a particular situation. The formation of a custom as a criterion of the concept under consideration indicates that the subjects have repeatedly resorted to this behavioral model. Thus, an established custom is a rule of behavior developed based on traditions for resolving certain situations).

The beginning of the commentary provides a definition of custom as a legal concept, followed by specifying its varieties – habitudes, established practice, usually demanded requirements. An important clarification of this concept is given in the form of a reference to the repetition of behavior by subjects in similar situations. It is noteworthy that there is a significant absence of personal position of the commentators, as decisions in legal discourse are made by the collective community with legislative authority.

Comments on sacred texts are extensively developed in religious discourse. They take the form of interpretations and are specific to different denominations. Comments by A.P. Lopukhin and his successors on the Bible are well-known as interpretations of the sacred scripture in the Orthodox Christian tradition:

Быт 1:2. Земля же была безвидна и пуста,

Понятие «земли» на языке Библии часто обнимает собой весь земной шар, со включением сюда и видимого неба как его наружной атмосферической оболочки (Быт 14:19, 22; Пс 68:35). В этом именно смысле оно употреблено и здесь, как это очевидно из контекста, по свидетельству которого хаотическая масса этой «земли» впоследствии выделила из себя твердь и воду (Быт 1:7).

Слова «безвидна и пуста», которыми характеризуется первобытная масса, заключают в себе мысль о «тьме, беспорядке и разрушении» (Ис 40:17; 45:18; Иер 4:23–26), т. е. дают идею о состоянии полного хаоса, в котором элементы будущего света, воздуха, земли, воды и также все зародыши растительной и животной жизни не поддавались еще никакому различению и были как бы перемешаны между собой. Лучшей параллелью к этим словам служит место из книги Премудростей Соломона, в котором говорится, что Бог сотворил мир из «необразного вещества» (Прем 11:18) и (2Пет 3:5).

и тьма над бездною,

Эта тьма была естественным следствием отсутствия света, который еще не существовал в качестве отдельной самостоятельной стихии, будучи выделен из первобытного хаоса лишь впоследствии, в первый день недели творческой деятельности. «Над бездною» и «над водою». В тексте подлинника стоят здесь два родственных по смыслу еврейских слова (tehom и

māim), означающих массу воды, образующую целую «бездну»; этим самым делается указание на расплавленное жидкообразное состояние первозданного, хаотического вещества [14].

(Genesis 1 : 2. Now the Earth was formless and empty,

The notion of “earth” in Bible encompasses the entire globe mostly, including the visible sky as its outer atmospheric layer (Genesis 14:19, 22; Psalms 68:35). In this very sense it is used here as well, as it can be seen from the context, according to which the chaotic bulk of this “earth” later divides into solitude and water (Genesis 1:7).

The words “formless and empty”, which characterize the initial mass, have the sense of “darkness, absence of order, and destruction” (Exodus 40:17; 45:18; Jeremiah 4:23 – 26), that is, they give the idea of complete chaos, in which the elements of future light, air, earth, water and all the embryos of plant and animal life were not subject to any separation, being somewhat mixed. The best parallel to these words is an extract from the Book of Wisdom of Solomon, in which it is stated that God created the world out of “shapeless substance” (Wisdom 11:18) and (2Pet 3:5).

darkness was over the abyss

*This darkness was the direct result of the absence of light, which did not yet exist as a separate independent element, being secreted from the primal chaos much later, during the first day of the divine week of creativity. “Over the abyss” and “over the water”. In the original text, two conceptually related Hebrew words (*tehom* and *māim*) are used here, both meaning a mass of water, forming a whole “abyss”; thereby indicating the molten liquid state of the primordial, chaotic substance).*

In the provided example, the commentary is presented as an interpretation of the original text, which is rich in metaphors. This explanation includes translating key words into everyday language, reconciling religious and scientific worldviews, and referencing other parts of the Bible. The cosmogonic worldview is depicted as the creation of the Earth from chaos. This is not contradictory to the physical version of planet formation from cosmic dust under the influence of gravitational forces.

The distinguished interpreter of the Quran, Sheikh Muhammad al-Ghazali, comments on one of the verses of the Surah (chapter) "Al-Araf" ("The Barriers") in the sacred book of Muslims as follows:

О, сыны Адама! Облекайтесь в свои украшения при каждой мечети. Ешьте и пейте, но не расточительствуйте, ибо Он не любит расточительных (31). Неумеренность, расточительный образ жизни и вызывающий внешний вид ведут к безнравственности. Религия не должна превращаться в состязание или в средство увеличения богатства. Стремясь к успеху в потусторонней жизни, человеку не следует сильно привязываться к мирским удовольствиям или стремиться к накоплению мирских благ. С другой стороны, аскетизм и ношение лохмотьев никак не могут приблизить человека к Аллаху. Аллах указывает на отсутствие здравого смысла и пользы в таких излишних аскетических стремлениях, говоря: «Скажи: «Кто запретил украшения Аллаха, которые он даровал своим рабам, и прекрасный

удел?» (32). Аллах даровал блага, и Его радует, когда люди наслаждаются этими благами для своего счастья и удовольствия [15, с. 183-184].

(Sons of Adam! Don't your jewelries in every mosque. Eat and drink, but do not waste, as He does not like the wasteful (31). Excessiveness, a wasteful way of life and vulgar attire lead to infidelity. Religion must not become a contest or a mean of increasing one's wealth. Striving to be successful in afterlife, the humankind must not attach to the pleasures of mortal world or try and collect the mortal goods. On the other hand, asceticism and wearing rags do not bring a person close to Allah. Allah points at the meaninglessness and the absence of profit in such excessive ascetic endeavors, saying: "Tell: "Who forbid the jewelries of Allah which he gifted to his servants, and the greater good?" (32). Allah gave the goods, and He is rejoiced when people enjoy those goods for their happiness and pleasure).

In this Surah, a commentary of ethical nature is given regarding a righteous way of life, which excludes both unethical extravagance and meaningless asceticism. This commentary represents an interpretation of important norms of behavior formulated in the sacred text. It is worth noting that the call for rational consumption aligns with modern scientifically proven ecological norms, while meaningless asceticism is psychologically based on a sense of superiority incompatible with respect for others.

Let us turn to comments in online discourse.

On the social network "VKontakte," a humorous message is posted:

Оладий – довольно известный элемент. Хорошо сочетается со сметанием, варением, сгущёнием. Имеются также изотопы оладия – картофий, кабачковий. Запасы оладия и картофия образуют драниковые горы. Интересно, что внешне похожий на оладий блиний не относится к его изотопам, а является самостоятельным элементом.

(Pancakeum is a well-known chemical element. It is well compatible with sour cremium, jellium and milkium. There are isotopes of pancakeum which are potatium and zucchinium. Large masses of pancakeum and potatium form mountains of draniks. It is peculiar that crepium, visually similar to pancakeum, is not one of its isotopes, but an individual element).

The comedic effect of this text is built on the occasional formation of names of food products by analogy with elements in Dmitri Mendeleev's periodic table. This message elicited a playful comment:

Новости химии? Нет, лингвистики. Но все же белорусские ученые доказали, что драниковий является самостоятельным элементом. :) (<https://vk.com/feed>).

(Chemistry news? No, the news of linguistics. Still, Belorussian scientists were able to prove that dranikium is a separate chemical element).

Online comments might not be comical only. The following message is thought-provoking:

С.К.: Доцент журфака МГУ: «В этом году мы набрали инопланетян».

«Незнаю», «генирал» и «через-чюр» — возможно, именно такое написание слов мы увидим в газетах лет через пять, когда нынешние первокурсники факультета журналистики МГУ получают свои дипломы. Вот

такие феноменальные результаты продемонстрировали набранные с помощью ЕГЭ студенты, среди которых есть даже стобалльники.

Как и ожидалось, проверочные работы новобранцев в вузах обернулись скандалом. Подробнее об этом рассказала доцент кафедры стилистики русского языка Анастасия Николаева.

— Первокурсники журфака только что написали проверочный диктант по русскому языку. Подтвердили ли они оценки, с которыми поступали?

— Установочные диктанты для выявления уровня знаний первокурсников мы пишем каждый год. Обычно с ними не справляются 3—4 человека. Но результаты этого года оказались чудовищными.

Из 229 первокурсников на страницу текста сделали 8 и меньше ошибок лишь 18%. Остальные 82%, включая 15 стобалльников ЕГЭ, сделали в среднем по 24—25 ошибок. Практически в каждом слове по 3—4 ошибки, искажающие его смысл до неузнаваемости. Понять многие слова просто невозможно.

(S.K.: *The docent of the journalistic faculty of MSU: "This year, we enrolled aliens"*).

«Незнаю», «генирал» и «через-чюр» - perhaps, those words will be seen in newspapers five years later, when today's freshmen of the journalistic faculty of MSU get their diplomas. Those phenomenal results were demonstrated by the students enrolled with the help of UNE, among which there are those who got a score of 100.

As expected, the entrance exams for freshmen at universities have turned into a scandal. More details were provided by Anastasia Nikolaeva, an associate professor at the Department of Russian Language Stylistics.

"Freshmen from the journalism faculty have just completed a diagnostic dictation in Russian. Did they confirm the grades they entered with?"

"We administer diagnostic dictations to assess the level of knowledge of freshmen every year. Usually, only 3-4 people struggle with them. But this year's results turned out to be atrocious. Out of 229 freshmen, only 18% made 8 errors or fewer per page of text. The remaining 82%, including those who scored 100 on the Unified State Exam (USE), made an average of 24-25 errors. There are practically 3-4 errors in every word, distorting its meaning beyond recognition. Many words are simply incomprehensible).

This message sparked a series of comments. Some of them were sharply critical of the sender of the text:

(D.B.: *Oh, it seems to me that the unnamed "docent of MGU" and the unbelievable group of students described are entirely fictional. As someone preparing for exams and deeply immersed in the educational process, I can confidently say that the author has no idea about the Unified State Exam (USE) or real students, including high achievers. Yes, I have plenty of questions about modern schoolchildren and teenagers, but such grotesque "unembellished stories that cannot be kept silent about" arouse skepticism from the very beginning.*

S.K.: *It's a convenient position - to immediately declare as fake anything that doesn't align with our beliefs. I also have some ideas about real students and the*

educational process. I can say that if the author exaggerated something, it's not to such an extent.

N.G.: Not surprised. Does this dictation have legal significance? As far as I remember – it does not. If there were a motivation to write correctly, for example, like in the USE, the result would be different. Well, if there is no such motivation, then for most examinees (and formally, this is not even an exam), there is only one goal – to hand in the dictation text sheet. Some even find it amusing. As the task is set, so it is solved, so there is no point in trying to interpret it).

Comments in online discourse on the topical social issue of declining literacy often boil down to objections regarding the accuracy of the published material and the justification of the reasons for the current state of affairs.

Conclusion

Let us summarize the main points.

Commentary, as a type of secondary communicative action, encompasses a multitude of varieties specific to particular discourse types. In colloquial discourse, commentary primarily expresses clarification and indicates the speaker's personal position. In scientific discourse, commentary is reduced to justifying the author's opinion and providing critical assessment, typically conveyed in a respectful manner. In legal discourse, commentary constitutes the definition and clarification of various legal concepts. In religious discourse, commentary on sacred texts involves interpretations of the original statements. In online discourse, commentary expresses personal evaluative attitudes towards a particular publication, often leading to a polemical dialogue formed by responses to it.

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КОММЕНТАРИЙ КОММУНИКАТИВТІ ӘРЕКЕТТІҢ ТҮРІ РЕТІНДЕ

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Аңдатпа. Мақалада екінші реттік коммуникативті әрекеттің типі – комментарий қарастырылады. Мақаланың мақсаты – комментарийлердің кейбір дискурсивті түрлеріне сипаттама беру (күнделікті, ғылыми, заңды, діни, интернет желісіндегі) және олардың белгілі бір дискурсивті спецификасын анықтау. Зерттеу нәтижесінде анықталғандай, күнделікті дискурста комментарий негізінен айқындау, сөйлеушінің жеке позициясын көрсету мақсатында қолданылады. Ғылыми дискурста комментарий автор пікірін дәлелдеу, сыни баға беруге саяды, бұл бағаның өзі сыйлы түрде жеткізіледі. Заңды дискурста комментарийлер құқық ортасында қолданылатын белгілі бір ұғымдарды анықтау және нақтылау үшін жазылады. Діни дискурстағы комментарийлер киелі мәтіндерді интерпретациялау мақсатында жазылады. Интернет желісі дискурсындағы комментарийлер белгілі бір жарияланымға қатысты сыни пікірді білдіреді, ал жарияланымға жазылған жауаптар полемикалық диалог құрады. Зерттеудің ғылыми жаңалығы келесіде: комментарийдің төрт типінің нақты ерекшеліктері анықталды. Комментарийді зерттеу сөйлеу жанрлары теориясын, мәтін және дискурс теориясын, прагмалингвистиканы дамытуға септігін тигізеді.

Тірек сөздер: комментарий, коммуникация, сөйлеу әрекеті, типі, дискурс, интерпретация, баға, полемика

КОММЕНТАРИЙ КАК ТИП КОММУНИКАТИВНОГО ДЕЙСТВИЯ

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Аннотация. В настоящей статье рассматривается комментарий как тип вторичного коммуникативного действия. Цель статьи – описать некоторые дискурсивные разновидности комментария (обиходный, научный, юридический, религиозный, сетевой) и выявить их определенную дискурсивную специфику. В результате исследования было

выявлено, что в обиходном дискурсе комментарий выражает преимущественно уточнение и обозначение личной позиции говорящего. В научном дискурсе комментарий сводится к обоснованию авторского мнения и критической оценке, которая обычно выражена в уважительной форме. В юридическом дискурсе комментарий представляет собой определение и уточнение тех или иных понятий, относящихся к сфере права. В религиозном дискурсе комментарий священного текста является интерпретацией исходных высказываний. В сетевом дискурсе комментарий выражает личное оценочное отношение к определенной публикации, при этом отклики на нее образуют полемический диалог. Научная новизна исследования состоит в том, что выявлены определенные особенности четырех типов комментария. Изучение комментария способствует развитию теории речевых жанров, теории текста и дискурса, прагмалингвистики.

Ключевые слова: комментарий, коммуникация, речевое действие, тип, дискурс, интерпретация, оценка, полемический

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