

PROSODIC ORGANIZATION OF IMPLICIT REFUSAL UTTERANCES

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As a result of the analysis of lexico-grammatical and intonation means' interaction, the author substantiates the specificity of English refusal utterances actualized implicitly by the speakers of different sociocultural levels. The study of language means of all levels made it possible to outline the features of implicit expression of refusal utterances as well as their correct coding and decoding in various communicative situations due to different reasons of their generation. The author also systematizes the tactics used by the speakers to actualize an implicit refusal.

Key words: *refusal utterances, prosodic organization, intonation means, English dialogue speech, sociocultural level of the speaker, implicit meaning, the class of reasons.*

The modern globalized world and fast changing regularities of English dialogue speech are characterized by a sustainable development of international contacts which are inevitable for the international, cultural, and business communication. Thus, many linguists and phoneticians (Kalyta, 2007; Kalyta, 2016) are focused on the study of emotional utterances as an integral part of communication and refusal utterances in particular as one of frequently used types of emotional utterances. It is worth mentioning that refusal utterances expressed implicitly cause more difficulties in their correct understanding due to their complex nature.

Therefore, the aim of this work is to specify lexico-grammatical and intonation means' role in implicit actualization of English refusal utterances and its influence on their correct coding and decoding.

In view of this, special attention is paid to the study of prosodic means interaction with other language levels means (Taranenko & Schaefer, 2018) in order to understand the mechanism of correct encoding and decoding of refusal utterances meaning (Sokyrskya, 2013) expressed either explicitly or implicitly. It is worth noting that the experimental material was divided into four main classes of reasons of refusal utterances generation: “I do not want to”, “I can, but I do not want to”, “I want to, but I cannot”, “I cannot” (Sokyrskya, 2012).

Estimating the issue in general, the implicit form of the refusal is less frequent than the explicit one. The choice of language means and the form of the refusal was determined by such characteristics as communicative situation (formal

or informal); interrelation of the speaker's and recipient's social statuses (higher, equal, lower) and the level of the refusal emotional-and-pragmatic potential (high, middle, low) (Sokyrskya, 2013) which were also taken into consideration during the experimental phonetic research.

We have also found out that implicit refusals can be actualized with the help of a number of tactics. Among the most frequent tactics used for the refusal realization is the change of the topic of conversation, which can be illustrated by the following example:

Striding across the lounge towards the elevator, she passed quite close to Lady Selina and Miss Marple, and she nodded to the former.

"Hello, Lady Selina. Haven't seen you since Crufts. How are the borzois?"

"What on earth are you doing here, Bess?" (Christie, 2011, 15).

This example demonstrates the refusal actualized in the informal communicative situation. Selina is surprised to meet Bess, which on the prosodic level is represented by a high rising-falling tone and the ascending sliding scale. This combination of the tone within the melodic contour is perceived as Selina's sincere surprise. The speaker doesn't give the answer but asks a question instead which is considered as one of the tactics of refusal.

The following refusal is actualized in the informal situation by the speaker whose sociocultural level is lower than that of the recipient:

"Why were you expelled?"

"It's gettin' late –and we've got lots ter do to morrow," said Hagrid loudly.

"Gotta get up ter town, get all yer books an' that." (Rawling, 1999, 46).

Hagrid changes the topic of the conversation due to unwillingness to answer the question. The emotional-and-pragmatic potential is mid which on the prosodic level is represented by increased loudness, a wide voice range, perceptive pauses and fast tempo which shows the speaker's emotions and slight irritation.

Another example of the tactic used for actualization of explicit refusal is a rhetorical question as in the example below:

"Who'll tell? We?"

"What are you talking a bout?" (Twain, 2001, 77).

The speaker doesn't want to answer the question which on the lexicogrammatical level is represented by the question aimed to change the topic of conversation. A wide pitch range of the utterance, increased loudness and legatolike rhythm show a high emotional-and-pragmatic potential of the refusal.

One more example of the dialogue with the use of this tactic can be illustrated by the following conversation:

"We'll go and get our stuff," said Ron in a hopeless sort of voice.

"[^]What [§]are you ^{`</sup>talking about, <sup>`}Weasley?" barked Professor McGonagall (Rawling (b), 81).

The professor is angry at Ron which on the prosodic level is proved by high rising-falling tones of the utterance, increased loudness, widened pitch range of the intonation contour and perceptive pause before [§]are. It allows us to define the emotional-and-pragmatic potential of the utterance as high.

Besides, questions can be used to express the speaker's implicit unwillingness to do something which he/she is not interested in:

At this festive season of the year, Mr Scrooge, ' said the gentleman, taking up a pen, 'it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the Poor and destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.'

[^]Are there [•]no [`]prisons?' asked Scrooge.

'Plenty of prisons,' said the gentleman, laying down the pen again.

"And the ^{`</sup>Union <sup>`}workhouses." demanded Scrooge. "—Are they [`]still in ope[^]ration?"

"They are. Still," returned the gentleman, "I wish I could say they were not."

"The ^{`</sup>Treadmill <sup>§</sup>and the <sup>`}Poor [•]Law [§]are in [`]full vigour, [•]then?" said Scrooge. (Dickens, 2011).

The refusal is actualized in the informal situation in the form of a series of interrogative sentences by the speaker whose sociocultural level is higher than that of the interlocutor. The speaker doesn't want to give money for charity because of his greediness and thus he asks questions to show that there are other organizations which can help with it instead. The combination of high rising and high falling tones, long pauses between and within intonation groups, positive widened pitch intervals, a rising-falling-rising melodic contour, moderate tempo and widened pitch range make the utterance sound sarcastic.

The example of the question which expresses unwillingness to perform a certain action can be illustrated by the following dialogue:

"That's mine!" said Harry, trying to snatch it back.

"[^]Who'd be ^{`</sup>writing to <sup>`}you?" sneered Uncle Vernon, shaking the letter open with one hand and glancing at it (Rawling 1999(b), 26).

The choice of lexico-grammatical means shows a clear refusal to give the letter to Harry, which is intensified by prosodic means represented in the given utterance by the sarcastic timbre, widened pitch range, legatolike rhythm and in melodic contour fluctuations.

Another example of the same tactic realization is shown in the following conversation:

He said: "Mayn't I go and play now, aunt?"

"What, a' ready? | How ¹much ²have you ³done?" (Twain, 2001, 17).

We have also found out that an exclamatory sentence is a frequent way to express a refusal of a mid or high emotional-and-pragmatic potential, for example:

"Alan, they will have to interest you. This one will have to interest you. <...> When he is missed, there must be no trace of him found here. You, Alan, you must change him, and everything that belongs to him, into a handful of ashes that I may scatter in the air."

"¹You are ²mad, ³Dorian!" (Wilde, 2013, 92–93).

The given refusal is actualized in the informal communicative situation with a high emotional-and-pragmatic potential achieved by the prominence of the words ¹mad and ²Dorian combined with a wide pitch range of the whole utterance, its slow tempo, high falling tones and a rising-falling intonation contour.

The dialogue which demonstrates the one-way interaction of all language level means in an exclamatory utterance can be illustrated by the following dialogue:

LORD WINDERMERE: *Margaret, I came to ask you a great favour, and I still ask it of you, though you have discovered what I had intended you should never have known that I have given Mrs. Erlynne a large sum of money. I want you to send her an invitation for our party to-night.*

LADY WINDERMERE: *¹You ²are ³mad /mmmæd/!* (Wilde, 2012).

The emotional-and-pragmatic potential of the utterance is qualified as high which is represented on the grammatical level by a short exclamatory sentence and emotionally-stressed word ¹mad. Prosodic means intensify the lexico-grammatical ones with the absence of a prehead and tail, an extra high pitch of the beginning of the intonation group and its low ending, a wide pitch range and descending scendant scale. A wide positive interval within the utterance also plays a very important role in expressing an implicit refusal.

Thus, the results of the auditory analysis show that the study of prosodic organization of English refusal utterances actualized by the speakers of high, mid and low sociocultural levels cannot be complete without considering the

utterance's lexico-grammatical level and communicative situation which allow the recipient to correctly decode its implicit refusal.

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