

AN OVERVIEW OF CLASSIFYING PRAGMATIC PRESUPPOSITIONS

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Abstract: The article examines the features of pragmatic presuppositions in the light of their classification by source of origin, axiological status and field of knowledge. Special attention is paid to the distinction between presuppositions based on personal experience and those obtained from textual sources. The mechanisms of their formation, representation in consciousness and participation in the interpretation of discourse are analyzed. The relative nature of the source of knowledge is emphasized, depending on the addressee's communicative experience. The difference between factual and evaluative presuppositions is also considered, including examples of an ethical and aesthetic nature. Examples from English-language media texts are given, demonstrating how different types of knowledge and assessments are activated in the process of understanding the text.

Keywords: pragmatic presuppositions, cognitive linguistics, personal experience.

The study of the characteristics and definitions of pragmatic presuppositions presented in the works of leading researchers in the field of pragmatics provides the basis to formulate the following definition of this cognitive-semantic phenomenon: pragmatic presuppositions are a set of knowledge related to the environment the world, the communicative situation, and its participants, as well as include knowledge of the social and linguistic norms and rules that make up communicative competence. This knowledge is necessary for the correct interpretation of an utterance within the framework of discursive interaction, while it is assumed that they are common to both the speaker and the listener [1, p. 427]. This approach to the interpretation of pragmatic presuppositions, among other things, allows us to reveal that they are closely related to various types of knowledge, which can be classified according to at least three criteria:

- (a) by origin of knowledge.;
- (b) according to their axiological significance;
- (c) by the area to which they relate.

In the following, we will focus on the characteristics of pragmatic presuppositions classified according to each of these grounds. Pragmatic presuppositions, grouped according to the criterion of the origin of knowledge (point (a)), can be divided into the following categories:

The article discusses issues related to the classification of pragmatic presuppositions based on the nature of the knowledge presented in them. The following classification criteria are distinguished: the source of the origin of knowledge, its value (axiological) characteristic and the field of knowledge. The research is based on the material of the English language.

Pragmatic presuppositions formed from personal experience should be understood as knowledge acquired in the process of individual mastering of reality. This knowledge is formed as a result of interaction with various manifestations of the external world — be it social, natural or man-made phenomena. As for pragmatic presuppositions derived from texts, they mean knowledge obtained from a variety of written sources, such as textbooks, journal publications, works of art, instructions, etc. Obviously, during the process of cultural adaptation, these two types of knowledge can intersect, forming a common cognitive space within which they can both complement and refute each other.

It should be emphasized that the status of pragmatic presuppositions, depending on their source, is often relative: for one addressee, information may be the result of personal experience, while for another, it may be knowledge gleaned from the text. In this regard, when analyzing the pragmatic presuppositions appearing in a particular utterance and trying to classify them by their source of origin, it is important to take into account who exactly the intended interpreter is. An example is the following statement:

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority board voted last week to take the first step toward installing 275 ticket gates on the entire 17.4-mile subway and at many light-rail stations. For a resident of Los Angeles or another metropolitan area where the subway operates, the understanding of this statement will be based on pragmatic presuppositions formed as a result of personal experience. Such a person knows that “subway” is a form of urban public transport, which is trains running in underground tunnels, and he has used them many times. He also knows from his own experience what the voting process (voted) is, as a result of which, for example, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority board makes certain decisions.

On the other hand, a resident of a provincial American town where there is no subway and who has never used it, for an adequate perception of this statement, will turn to knowledge borrowed from various texts, be it a school textbook, stories from friends and other sources. At the same time, pragmatic presuppositions regarding the essence of voting belong to the category of personal experience for both a resident of Los Angeles and a representative of deep America. However, if none of them is a member of the city’s transport department, then information about this administrative structure will refer to presuppositions based on textual sources.

The cardinal difference between the two types of presuppositions mentioned above lies in the way they are mentally represented. Presuppositions formed through personal experience represent a reflection of individual interaction with reality in the form of statements expressing either objective knowledge or subjective value judgments (for example: “Boiling water is hot”, “Stealing is bad”). In contrast, presuppositions borrowed from textual sources are expressed through the restoration, transformation, or simultaneous restoration and transformation of knowledge already fixed in the long-term memory of an individual (for example: “Hamlet is the Danish Prince”, “Sherlock Holmes killed Professor Moriarty”, “Cutty Sark is one of the fastest ships”).

At the same time, the fundamental similarity between presuppositions based on personal experience and those obtained through textual sources lies in the similarity of the mechanisms of their formation and functioning. Turning to the cognitive aspects of understanding a text, T. Van Dijk and V. Kinch note that “in most cases, descriptions in texts relate to objects, persons, places, or facts that the reader has already encountered in the past. These episodes stored in memory are part of structures (or clusters) united by similarity. These structures are episodic, and therefore subjective and unique for each person” [6, p. 177]. This means that the perception of the text is ensured, among other things, by the reader's knowledge of the references indicated by the names and nominal groups found in the text. Moreover, this knowledge — those that allow us to perceive the referent as a unique object [7, p. 190] — can be both a product of personal experience and the result of assimilation of information from various texts.

Classification by axiological status

Pragmatic presuppositions, grouped according to their axiological (evaluative) nature — criterion (b)), can be divided into the following types:

- a) presuppositions reflecting objective knowledge about the world [2, p. 299];
- b) presuppositions expressing subjective assessments, beliefs and opinions [1, p. 427-428; 6, p. 160].

The key difference between these two types of pragmatic presuppositions is the presence or absence of an evaluative component. The first type does not carry a value load and can be expressed in the form of propositions containing neutral judgments, for example: "S is P", "S exists", "S is greater than P". The second type, on the contrary, has a pronounced evaluative coloring and is formulated through propositions with axiological predicates. These estimated presuppositions can be further divided into:

- presuppositions of an ethical nature (for example: "S is good/bad", "decent/indecant", "noble/low", etc.);
- presuppositions of an aesthetic nature (for example: "S is beautiful/ugly", "beautiful/ugly", "harmonious/disharmonious", etc.) [6, p. 160].

Since there is no explanation in the statement itself or in the text of the article as to what constitutes a hurricane, snow, sleet, or freezing rain, it can be concluded that the author of the text assumes that the intended audience, especially residents, has the Northeastern region of the USA (Northeast) — relevant knowledge. Thus, it is assumed that readers have a preliminary understanding of these phenomena. At the same time, knowledge about the nature of a hurricane, snow, sleet and freezing rain should be attributed to the field of factual, empirical knowledge of reality. At the same time, the understanding that the listed meteorological phenomena are accompanied by harm or create certain inconveniences for the population forms negative value judgments, that is, it causes the activation of axiological presuppositions.

Consequently, when interpreting the components of snow, sleet and freezing rain, two types of pragmatic presuppositions are activated: on the one hand, those that are based on objective knowledge about the world, and on the other, those that express subjective evaluative ideas formed on the basis of relevant experience and knowledge. Pragmatic presuppositions, classified according to the criterion of the sphere of knowledge — foundation (b), are divided into the following types::

a) presuppositions, which include both knowledge and value judgments about reality, as well as about the patterns underlying the structure of the external world. Such presuppositions can be expressed both in the form of factual statements (for example: S is P, S exists, S is greater than P) and in the form of evaluative constructions (for example: S is good/bad, beautiful/ugly, etc.).

b) presuppositions reflecting knowledge of a communicative and linguistic nature, including elements of communicative competence. This type of knowledge, in turn, can be differentiated into two subgroups. The first one covers knowledge of the language system as a set of lexical, grammatical, stylistic, and intonation-prosodic norms (for example: The word S means P, the expression S is rude). The second one includes linguistic or conventional knowledge, i.e. ideas about the communicative context, the communication situation, the characteristics of its participants, as well as the rules for using linguistic means to achieve certain speech intentions and correct interpretation of statements (for example: For A to make P, you need to say S; A is a military man, therefore, his S means P).

In this regard, it is appropriate to cite the remark of M.L. Makarov, who emphasizes: "Thus, at least two cognitive models are presented in discourse: one describes the structure of a subject-reference situation, and the other models the "procedural" aspect of communication, that is, the scenario of a specific communicative episode" [6, p. 158]. It follows from this that the first of these models correlates with objective knowledge about the world and its structure, while the second is based on knowledge related to the communicative and linguistic sphere.

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