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CONTEXTUAL PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF AMBIGUITY

Polysemantic situations that arise during a speech act (written or spoken) are called ambiguity in linguistics. Since the middle of the last century, ambiguity has been on the agenda as a language universal, being investigated at all – phonetic, lexical and grammatical levels of languages with different systems. According to N. Chomsky's theories of surface-structure and deep-structure, the structural-semantic composition of the sentence (phrase) is formed in the deep-structure and becomes a communication model with phonetic sounding in the surface-structure. In the deep-structure of some sentences, depending on their syntactic formation or on some other reasons, the surface structure is understood in more than one meaning, causing ambiguity. The basis of ambiguity originates in the lower layer, which is considered the base for the upper layer of the sentence. However, when the utterance is included in the speech act, in the surface-structure ambiguous situations cause obstacles for focusing on the main content of the context. Currently, in connection with the extensive study of textual linguistics, the issue of ambiguity is being studied at the contextual pragmatic level. It is known that pragmatics studies the meaning expressed by language signs contextually in the speech act. Since the ambiguity arises from two different meanings of the language unit that can arise within the context, it is more correct to study the logically ambiguous situations in a pragmatic direction. Because ambiguity emerges purely as a language-speech fact. Therefore, both identifying ambiguity and neutralizing it are issues that can be resolved within the text. In ambiguous situations, the sign system of the language is broken, because one lexeme or utterance can represent more than one object and event. This leads to confusion and cognitively incorrect decoding of the current context. For this reason, pragmatic analysis of ambiguous situations is appropriate.

Key words: ambiguity, surface structure, deep structure, pragmatics, contextual analysis, speech act, locutionary act, cognition.

Introduction. Ambiguity is widely investigated as a language phenomenon. M. Awwad wrote with reference to D. Atlas: “*Ambiguity is derived from ‘ambiagotatem’ in Latin which combined ‘ambi’ and ‘ago’ each word meaning ‘around’ or ‘by’, and thus the concept of ambiguity is hesitation, doubt, or uncertainty and that concept associated the term ‘ambiguous’ from the first usage until the most recent linguistic definition* [1, p. 195]. Ambiguity is sometimes difficult to distinguish from homonymy. Based on the research, we can note that it is impossible to identify ambivalence and homonymy, nor to distinguish between them by drawing a line of demarcation. It should be noted that polysemy or homonymy of the word is valued as a historical category in the language, and their establishment in the language is a phenomenon that originates from the language's evolutionary process. Thus, the meaning of the word is expanded and a multi-meaning word is created by transferring the meaning of the word to other objects and events through real and metaphorical means due to functional and external similarity. Also, homonymous words derive from words that are adapted to the language from time to time depending on the devel-

opment of the economic, cultural and scientific thinking of the society.

The phenomenon of ambiguity arising from syntactic structure was first analyzed by N. Chomsky in his work “*Syntactic Structures*” (1957) by applying transformation methods at the scientific level and proved its derivation mechanism in language. The scientist's new method of generative transformation made it possible to **further expand research in this field**, to find out the reason and source of other ambiguous phenomena arising in syntactic constructions. The role of S. Ullmann, J. Lyons, P. Conway, G. N. Leech, D. A. Crystal, D. A. Cruse, G. Yule, W. L. Chafe S. Greenbaum, R. Quirk, D. D. Oaks, J. K. Ward and others in researching the phenomenon of ambiguity and studying it pragmatically can be specially mentioned.

In nowadays linguistics polysemantic situations are interpreted on contexts which are called pragmatic analysis of language phenomenon. “*Charles H. Morris first defined pragmatics with the intention of distinguishing pragmatics from syntax and semantics in his work Foundations of the Theory of signs. As Geoffrey Leech stated in 1974, pragmatics is the*

study of how utterances have different meanings in different situations. On account of this, people usually relate pragmatics to ambiguity. Pragmatics deals with specific utterances in specific contexts...” [2].

However, the resulting ambiguity, regardless of its type, appears as a product of the speech act, therefore, the ambiguity of a syntactic unit is not a historical category, it manifests pragmatically as a contextual phenomenon. “*Aristotle considers that*” writes M. Awwad, “*ambiguity arises because the number of items that form vocabulary of any human language is much smaller than the number of realities that the vocabulary items are supposed to depict to make human language meaningful and functional*” [1, p. 196].

Any kind of ambiguity does not exist in language like lexical homonyms, they arise depending on the context in which they appear. Although the multiple meaning of a syntactic unit with the same lexical composition gives it the “status of homonymy”, the ambiguity is temporal for that utterance, and ambiguity can be neutralized as an obstacle with pragmatic-contextual analysis. Since the persistence of ambiguity in language is pragmatically dependent on the determination of the dominant meaning in the context, ambiguity cannot be differentiated and persist in language. It can arise for various reasons because it arises spontaneously only during the speech act (written or spoken).

The main source of ambiguity can be a pragmatic misunderstanding of the meaning of any paronymous word according to the context, or the parallel dominance of two different meanings of a lexical homonymous word within a sentence, as well as structural homonymy that can change between the constituent components of the sentence and result in updating the semantics of the sentence. In other words, ambiguity can be generated at both word and sentence levels. It is important to note that ambiguity, being a pragmatically context-dependent phenomenon, creates diversity of opinion and prevents a complete, clear communication of the idea.

Our **main goal** in analyzing ambiguous situations pragmatically is to explain that the context has a unique position in determining the dominant meaning in polysemantic situations, regardless of the type of ambiguity.

The following **tasks** have been put forward for achieving the goal:

- Explain the main contents of ambiguity and give short information about the types of ambiguity;
- To note the similarities and differences between ambiguity and homonymy;

- To show that the transformational-generative grammatical method is of exceptional importance in the study of ambiguous situations;

- To interpret the role of the situation in the cognitive understanding of meaning in pragmatic ambiguous situations.

A methodological basis for the study of the pragmatic analysis of ambiguity.

Inductive, deductive, transformational, contextual analysis methods are used in the given article for pragmatic investigation of ambiguous situations.

Ambiguity as a language phenomenon. Starting from the 50s of the 20th century, the syntactic structure of the language was studied by L. Bloomfield’s compositional analysis [3] and Z. Harris’s transformation methods [4], but these theories were not sufficient to deeply investigate the structural-semantic features of the language, there is a need to develop more consistent and modern methods and concepts. However, N. Chomsky’s universal transformational-generative grammatical concept was developed by the scientist with reference to the previous concepts. He wrote concerning with his new theory: “*From now on I will consider a language to be a set (finite or infinite) of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements. All natural languages in their spoken or written form are languages in this sense....*” [5, p. 30].

Analyzing the sentence based on completely new transformation methods, N. Chomsky showed that human speech consists of an infinite number of transformed sentences due to a small number of elements of the language. Acts of transformation occur between the lower and upper layer, and the lower layer plays the role of a base for the formation and realization of the upper layer. It is the study of ambiguity in language at the scientific level that is valued as an effective contribution of N. Chomsky to the science of linguistics.

N. Chomsky's other contribution to the science of linguistics was his analysis of the phenomenon of ambiguity arising in syntactic constructions in a scientifically justified way in deep and surface structures based on tree diagrams, and interpreting the phenomenon of structural homonymy due to the semantics arising from the renewal of the syntactic function of intra-sentence components.

Pragmatic analysis of ambiguity. Taking into account that the phenomenon of ambiguity arises only contextually and the dominant meaning is determined by textual dependence, the presented article analyzed the phenomenon of ambiguity from a pragmatic point of view and tried to interpret it on the

basis of examples selected from various sources. "...pragmatics contrasts with semantics, the study of linguistic meaning, and is the study of how contextual factors interact with linguistic meaning in the interpretation of utterances" [6].

As mentioned, the well-known types of ambiguities are phenomena that are manifested in dialogical or written speech, resulting in two different meanings depending on the context. Because the spoken or written utterance is understood by different people in different contexts, it is causing ambiguity of the same lexical or syntactic unit. It is important to have a clear, understandable situation for interpersonal communication to be sustainable.

Communication is a process that originates from the need of people to transmit information to each other. Natural language speakers share their ideas and exchange ideas using language tools. Pragmatics, as a field of linguistics, studies issues such as the act of live communication between people, the mechanism of its formation, and how contextually the meaning is expressed by means of language. G. Yule mentions four important issues studied by pragmatics: "*Pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning, is the study of contextual meaning, is the study of how more gets communicated than is said, is the study of expression of relative distance. These are the four areas that pragmatics is concerned with*" [7, p. 3]. Pragmatically, for the successful reception of communication, it is an important condition for the interlocutors to cognitively correctly perceive the current situation and the listener's response to it. Because pragmatics is a field of linguistics that contextually analyzes and studies how the ideas said (or written) by the speaker (or writer) are understood by the listener and reader, what impressions it creates in them, and what unsaid or assumed ideas are behind the said ideas. For the correct analysis of the pragmatically created context, the correct ordering of the locative, illocutionary and perlocutionary stages that serve to create the speech act, and the creation of a presupposition against the opinion expressed by the speaker are important facts.

Under these conditions, it is possible to have a successful and understandable exchange of ideas between the interlocutors. How meaning is expressed during communication is the main research object of pragmatics. The word pragmatics means "action" and as a field of science, pragmatics is related to semiotics. "*Pragmatics studies the meaning expressed by language units within specific situations*" [8, p. 12]. Pragmatically, it is an important condition for continuous reception of live communication, correct selection of syntactic constructions and clear expression in

the speech act for full understanding of the idea. In other words, in N. Chomsky's concept, the idea of an ideal speaker and listener with language competence is an important factor in the pragmatic cognition of the context.

However, this is not always true, i.e., in the mind of the person who receives the transmitted information, not the intended target content of the information, but completely different information is decoded, so that this conceptual sphere does not form symmetry with the information in the perception of the information transmitter, and in this case, an ambiguous situation arises that causes disagreement. Such situations are unexpected, for example, homophones, homonyms, paronyms, or the variable syntactic function of the internal components of the syntactic construction, can arise spontaneously during the speech act due to metaphors.

But the controversial issue is that ambiguity can arise pragmatically due to the perception of context in different environments without any source to generate it, that is, existing text, dialogue, etc. By being perceived by the speaker and the listener in a different context, it creates a pragmatic ambiguous situation, which is termed pragmatic ambiguity. Events unfolding in the current context can be pragmatically focused in more than one sense according to the intention of the speaking and listening parties.

Ambiguity is a situation created in the process of speech (written or oral) in which the meaning expressed by any syntactic construction in the context – phrase or sentence can be understood in more than one context and this situation is unexpected, that is, the ambiguous context created for the parties transmitting and receiving the information is not a premeditated goal. Because the fact that two different meanings within a text dominate at the same time and give it both in-context and alternatively out-of-context meaning arises from decoding the situation in a pragmatic cognitive sense in a binary form. In this case, the ambiguity arises spontaneously, without serving any purpose, under the conditions allowed by the components within the text, it becomes an obstacle to understanding the content of the given text as intended, it is understood in completely different ways in the perception of the person who transmits the information and the person who receives it and processes it in his mind.

As a result, the content of the transmitted information is distorted and leads to disagreement. The two cognitively perceived different meanings occur in the context in which two separate individuals understand the pragmatically created context. The different

perception of the target information of the situation allows for the analysis of the meaning in more than one context by creating a difference of opinion. In addition to the known meaning of a language construction containing a superstructure, another meaning in its deep structure unexpectedly “appears” in the upper layer for various reasons, causing another meaning of the language unit to appear. Such a situation occurs when the known context is perceived in two different semantics: in the mind of the sender, in the primary sense, and in the perception of the recipient, in the derived sense.

Here, the outlook of the interlocutors, their approach to the issue, knowledge of language, and their ability to use it should be taken into account. Because cognition is individual, although language is a human trait, using it and using it is a personal quality. In other words, chess is a mundane game, but during the game, everyone exhibits their abilities and skills, their style of play.

Depending on the characteristic features of the language or syntactic units that cause ambiguity, different types of ambiguity are distinguished: phonetic, lexical, grammatical or syntactic ambiguity. Simply put, ambiguity is a phenomenon that arises spontaneously within the context itself. In an ambiguous situation, the information is decoded in a form according to the cognition of the person who receives it, which does not correspond to the content intended in the perception of the person who transmits the information. At the same time, “*Misunderstanding and miscommunication are rooted the crucial notion of ambiguity. Ambiguity is a widely discussed concept in pragmatics*” [9, p. 193]. Because pragmatics examines meaning in the process of discourse, during live speech activity.

Pragmatic cognition of each person is realized on the basis of his own experience, evaluating the situation and analyzing it with the means of language. A person’s thinking about the world and events occurring in objective reality are expressed by language structures, the language picture of the world in a person’s mind is coded and decoded through language means. For example, the sentence “*I sent her photos taken in London*” can be analyzed in a dual sense due to the syntactic structure of the sentence itself, and the sentence can be understood in two different ways. Each pronoun in the sentence creates lexical-grammatical homonymy both in terms of meaning and syntactic function as personal and possessive pronouns. Accordingly, the sentence can be analyzed as follows: 1) *I(NP)/sent(VP)/her(NP)/ photos taken in London(NP)// (I sent the photos taken in London*

to her); 2) *I(NP)/sent(VP)/her photos(NP)/taken in London(NP)// (I sent someone her photos taken in London)*. Therefore, the given sentence can be understood pragmatically in two meanings, and the dominant meaning is determined depending on the context.

From this point of view, the reasons for the emergence of contextually derived ambiguous cases are also investigated by pragmatic analysis, because pragmatics explains exactly semantics within the context. Since any kind of ambiguity is related to semantics, more specifically contextual semantics, the study of ambiguous cases is studied directly in relation to pragmatics.

As we mentioned, ambiguity is a purely contextual phenomenon. It arises from the understanding of the meaning of contextual components, such as homonym, homophone or paronym, in a binary form, as well as from the fact that the meaning of a syntactic construction can be understood with different semantics depending on its grammatical structure. For example, *She is looking for a match* [10]. The given sentence can be understood in different contexts due to the homonymy of the word *match*. *Match* – *matches* – *small sticks used for lighting*; by being used in the meanings of *soccer game* and *someone’s lover who is suitable for him/her* enabling the dual meaning of the out-of-context sentence: 1) *She is looking for a match*; 2) *She is looking for a suitable person to marry*. The second version of the sentence creates a metaphorical ambiguity because it is derived from the metaphor of the meaning of the word. Ambiguity can be neutralized by clarifying it with a small micro text: “*Why doesn’t she have a family?*” (or *Why is she unmarried?*) – *She likes nobody, she is looking for a match*.

Pragmatically, ambiguity is caused by how the situation is perceived, analyzed by the listener or reader. The main source of this is homonymous or paronymous words used in selected syntactic constructions or the syntactic structure of the sentence itself. For example, let’s have a look at such an elliptical sentence: *Mary cares the flowers more than her parents*. The grammatical structure of the given sentence allows it to be understood in two ways, the person reading the sentence can understand it in two different ways: 1) *Mary cares the flowers more than her parents do (more than her parents care the flowers)*; 2) *Mary cares the flowers more than she cares her parents (more than them)*. Pragmatically the dominant meaning can be determined by the context.

There is also a debate among researchers that the meaning of any sentence in the context cannot necessarily be interpreted in more than two ways for the

emergence of pragmatic ambiguity. Pragmatic ambiguity is a situation arising from the perception of the current situation in a dual form. For example, Donnellan insists that “*The structural or semantic ambiguity of the sentence is not necessary for the emergence of pragmatic ambiguity, but the situation itself*” [11, p. 113]. But Kripke assumes that “*There must be a semantic or syntactic source in the context for the derivation of ambiguous conditions, and confirms the idea that pragmatic ambiguity originates from them*” [11, p. 113]. But pragmatically, ambiguity can also arise from a misunderstanding of the context or a variety of presuppositions. Therefore, from what has been said, it can be concluded that pragmatic ambiguity can be caused by the situation itself, that is, the speaking and listening parties can “comment” the situation in more than one sense. For example, consider the first dialogue:

1) A: – *Her husband is kind to her.*

B: – *No, he isn't. The man you're referring isn't her husband.*

In the second dialogue, the conversation has a completely different meaning:

2) A: – *Her husband is kind to her.*

B: – *He is kind to her, but he isn't her husband* [11, p. 112].

The third dialogue may contain:

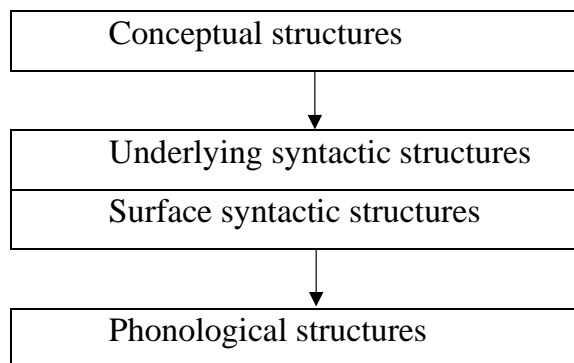
3) A: – *Her husband is kind to her*

B: – *Yes, he is kind, she is a lucky woman.*

In the first and second dialogues, it is possible to perceive ambiguity in the content of the context, which is related to the pragmatic understanding of the expression *her husband* in a double form. The sentence “*He is not her husband*” gives rise to such a presupposition: “*If he is not her husband, then who is he?*” In the third dialogue, no circumstances allow the context to be accepted in a dual sense. Ambiguity in the given example occurs when the context is analyzed pragmatically in different environments, and the dialogue is understood based on the different presuppositions created by the participants. Regarding the expression of such contextual meanings, C. Lyons writes: “*What a person means by his utterance and what his utterance means, the latter being explicable ultimately in terms of the former*” [12, p. 608].

As it can be seen, when the sentences formed in the substructure are phonetically sounded in the superstructure and transmit the information to the other party, the utterance is ambiguous, depending on the recipient's way of thinking and in what sense he perceives the information. E. C. Traugott, who studies the syntactic structure of the English language from a historical point of view, writes in this regard: “

These patterns constitute, in the broadest terms, the conceptual structure, the patterns of sounds (phonology), which we use to express the conceptual structures, and the sentence structure (syntax) that forms a bridge between sound and conceptual structure. The intermediary role of syntax is particularly well illustrated by the way in which language allows for both ambiguity and paraphrase” [13, p. 6]. The scientist who approaches the issue from this position shows the following levels of the syntactic structure of the language that are related to each other:



[13, p. 6]

From the diagram expressing N. Chomsky's transformational derivational grammatical concept, it is clear once again that the contextual meaning of the sentence is formed in such a substructure and presented due to the linear arrangement of phonemes in the superstructure. All the sentences used in the language are sentences derived from the transformation of the lower layer to the upper layer, and these sentences do not have an end. Ambiguous sentences also arise during these acts of transformation, and the enabling syntactic structure of the sentence allows its semantics to be understood in more than one sense. For example, the sentence *It is too hot to eat* [13, p. 6] can be interpreted in not two but three meanings, because all meanings express the facts in terms of objective reality: 1) *The meal is too hot in temperature and it is impossible to eat it;* 2) *The meal is spicy hot for eating;* 3) *The weather is too hot to eat something.* The main source of ambiguity in the sentences is the polysemy of the phrase *to be hot*, which gives rise to different meanings of the sentence, which remains structurally stable. In such situations, the dominant meaning is pragmatically determined by context dependence. For example, such a context allows to eliminate the ambiguity of the sentence: *I don't like such spicy meals. It is too hot to eat means There is too much pepper in the meal, I can't eat such meals.* Pragmatically, the ambiguity of the sentence

was neutralized and contextually the dominant meaning was determined.

Conclusions. The main goal of the presented article is to pragmatically interpret the role of context in determining dominant meaning in ambiguous situations. In such situations where there is a spread of ideas and the content of information is distorted, the dominant meaning is

solved by text dependence, allowing the thought to focus on the main target information. In this regard, it can be noted that in pragmatic ambiguous situations, consituation is an important factor in determining the dominant meaning. Any kind of ambiguity finds its solution in context, so any text is sufficient for concrete understanding of the main meaning of the polysemantic language unit.

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Годжаєва М. А. КОНТЕКСТНО-ПРАГМАТИЧНИЙ АНАЛІЗ НЕОДНОЗНАЧНОСТІ

Полісемантичні ситуації, що виникають під час мовленнєвої дії (письмової чи усної), у лінгвістиці називають багатозначністю. З середини минулого століття багатозначність постала на порядку денному як мовна універсалія, досліджується на всіх – фонетичному, лексичному та граматичному рівнях мов з різними системами. Відповідно до теорій поверхневої та глибинної структур Н. Хомського, структурно-семантичний склад речення (фрази) формується в глибинній структурі і стає моделлю спілкування з фонетичним звучанням у поверхневій структурі. У глибинній структурі деяких речень, залежно від їх синтаксичного утворення чи з якихось інших причин, поверхнева структура розуміється в кількох значеннях, що спричиняє двозначність. Основа багатозначності бере початок у нижньому шарі, який вважається основою для верхнього шару речення. Однак, коли висловлювання включено в мовленнєвий акт, у поверхневій структурі неоднозначні ситуації створюють перешкоди для зосередження на основному змісті контексту. В даний час у зв'язку з широким дослідженням текстологічної лінгвістики питання багатозначності вивчається на контекстно-прагматичному рівні. Відомо, що прагматика вивчає значення, виражене мовними знаками контекстно в мовленнєвому акті. Оскільки багатозначність виникає внаслідок двох різних значень мовної одиниці, які можуть виникати в контексті, правильніше досліджувати логічно неоднозначні ситуації в прагматичному напрямку. Бо багатозначність постає суто як мовно-мовленнєвий факт. Тому як виявлення двозначності, так і її нейтралізація є проблемами, які можна вирішити в тексті. У неоднозначних ситуаціях знакова система мови порушується, тому що одна лексема або вислів може репрезентувати декілька предметів і подій. Це призводить до плутанини та когнітивно неправильного декодування поточного контексту. З цієї причини доречним є прагматичний аналіз неоднозначних ситуацій.

Ключові слова: багатозначність, поверхнева структура, глибинна структура, прагматика, контекстний аналіз, мовленнєвий акт, когнітивний акт, когніція.