

Intensification as a Multilevel System of Modern English

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Abstract: The article under discussion depicts intensification as a multilevel system of modern English. The intensification of an utterance is realized at phonetic (graphic representation), morphological, lexical, syntactic and textual linguistic levels. The author of the article considers that the problems of the use of intensifiers, their functioning, and combinability may also be of interest for further research in this field.

Keywords: Intensification, semantics, definition, category, quantity, magnitude, value, force, quality, functional styles of speech.

Introduction

The status of the category of intensity is one of the most debatable problems of modern language science. The category of intensity is closely related to such notions as evaluative and expressive. The term "intensity" comes from the adjective "intense", meaning "tense, intensified" [8]. The majority of researchers of the category of intensity define it as a semantic category, which is based on the concept of quantity in the broad sense of the word.

Main part

One of the first linguists to investigate in detail the concept of intensity was Bally. He believed that "the term intensity should be understood as all differences reduced to the categories of quantity, magnitude, value, force, etc., regardless of whether we are talking about concrete representations or abstract ideas" [1]. Such a broad interpretation of the term (as a quantitative change of a sign) is also shared by many modern researchers.

For example, in "Intensity as a component of word semantics in modern English" E. Sheigal defines intensity as "the level of development of a feature within a given measure that does not entail a change in a given quality". [10]. It should be noted that such a definition does not fully reflect the characteristic of intensity from the position of its interaction with such notions as gradation and the measure of a feature, the wide use of various means of amplification in texts belonging to different functional styles of speech.

In all languages, the same elements of "identical meanings", carrying the meaning of quantitative changes of the feature, are repeated many times in the human information space [9].

Considering the category of intensity, in our opinion, it is necessary to take into account its close connection not only with the objective categories of quality and measure of the sign, but also with the subjective and pragmatic categories of expressiveness, emotionality, evaluativeness and imagery.

A. Wierzbicka associates intensification with the objective properties of the object, as well as with the speaking subject, refracting the picture of the world in his consciousness. The sphere of intensification includes attributes capable of being graded on a scale of intensity. In this interpretation, intensification appears as a type of evaluation in the broad sense of the word. Realizing the strengthening or weakening of the semantics of the reference word, intensification has also a pragmatic function [13-15].

Intensification of an utterance, being a graded category, is inseparably connected with the notion of an intensity scale. By intensity scale in the present study we mean a sign system, subjectively marked in the mind of an individual, which displays one or another quantitative characteristic. Speaking of the intensity scale, it is important to identify the starting point from which a quantitative characteristic will either rise or fall. As I.I. Ubin notes, "the zero point on such a scale can be considered the word itself, which is the object of amplification or attenuation in the text" [12].

I. I. Turanskiy proposes the terminological unit "ordinal" to denote the neutral step on this scale. He defines the division upwards on the intensity scale as "superordinate", downwards as "subordinate" - something conveying deintensifying features. The scholar also says that the "subordinate" level is followed by the "zero mark" or absence of communication [11]. The number of divisions on the intensity scale has a subjective

character and depends on the linguistic competence and speech experience of the participants of the communication act. I.A. Kozlova notes that "gradation of quality by intensity allows for infinite detailing" [3].

Intensification of the utterance is realized on all linguistic levels: phonetic (graphic representation), morphological, lexical, syntactic and textual.

Phonetic and prosodic features of the utterance are conveyed in written speech by means of graphic means of intensification, such as multiple letter use, italics, syllable stretching, use of capital letters within a lexical unit and other expressive means:

- 1) multiple letter usage (Allll aboarrrrd);
- 2) the use of italics (Can you imagine Mr. Clutter missing church? just to *sleep?*);
- 3) stretching a syllable (ve-ry sad, ve-ry sad);
- 4) the use of capital letters within a lexical unit (he was a man of Nobility and Courage).

In these cases, we can talk about an oppositional series, which has a two-member structure: the neutral member is opposed to the intensified version, for example, allll aboarrd - all aboard, etc. These examples of the graphical representation of the phonetic level indicate that the elements of the intensity scale do not fall below the neutral level, as they only actualize the unit of the utterance. In our opinion, the graphic representation of the intensification of the utterance is actively used in modern electronic communication, where there is a mass of both linguistic and non-linguistic means for expressing the intensifying effect.

The morphological level of intensity in modern English is represented by synthetic forms of adjectives and adverbs *-er*, *-est*, analytical forms *more* and *the most*, lexical affixes of enlargement and diminution:

- 1) The degrees of comparison of adjectives in English are represented by a three-member paradigmatic series, for example, *careful - more - the most careful* or *big - bigger - the biggest*. In these series, the first two terms have a neutral degree of intensity, while the remaining ones convey either a high or the highest degree of intensity. It should be noted that the use of a word in the comparative and superlative degrees is not always an indicator of intensification.

I.A. Malinina and E.V. Terentyeva note that "not every use of comparative degrees can serve the purpose of intensification. *The young man did so, then he asked in a calmer voice: "What does it mean?"* [6]. I.I. Turansky associates this phenomenon with the "parametric characteristics of the object of speech" [11];

- 2) lexical affixes of enlargement and diminution are presented in the following examples: *power - superpower*, *correct - hypercorrect*, *to state - to overstate*, etc.

Speaking about the manifestation of intensity at the lexical level, it is worth mentioning that in the two above-mentioned levels the process of intensification has an explicit character, where the paradigm "zero intensity component" - "intensified component" has a visual formulation in the form of additional linguistic means (for example, graphic change, affixation). At the lexical level, the process of intensification has an extremely different structure and represents an internal process. Thus, in the opposition row "*big - enormous - gigantic*" the second and third lexemes differ from the first one by a certain degree of intensity. Intensification in this case occurs according to the internal structure: the increment of meaning is implied in the intensified variant and does not go beyond the limits of the lexical unit being compared. The intensified process is not expressed by any external linguistic units. The field of lexical means of intensification may include adjectives of intensifying content, synonymous verb series, adverbial intensifiers, quantifier words:

- 1) adjectives of intensifying content reflect gradual characteristics of properties and qualities of objects, such as "*big - enormous - gigantic*";
- 2) synonymous verb series, for example, the series "*to look - to gaze - to stare - to glare*". In this synonymic series we can distinguish two semes: the seme that conveys the main meaning and the seme of intensity;
- 3) adverbs-intensifiers, which can include such units as *extremely*, *deeply*, *utterly*, *absolutely*, etc. It should be noted that these language units often perform a quantitative function with complete lexico-conceptual emptiness. The next section of this paper is devoted to the analysis of this category;
- 4) quantifier words, for example, *frieze of lades*, *hordes of strangers*, *for hours*. The essence of intensification with the help of quantifier words consists in expressing by means of language a *large, very large or extremely large* quantity. Detailed consideration of this category takes place in the dissertation research of N.V. Nechiporenko [7].

At the syntactic level, intensification is represented by the following phenomena: repetition, exclamatory sentences and pleonastic constructions:

- 1) repetition as a syntactic phenomenon "emphasizes the significance of a speech element, enhances the emotional impact of speech" [4]. Repetitive elements, as a rule, are part of evaluative predicates, as part of the complement and various circumstances, for example, in the sentence - *I'm sick of this talk, talk of war*. In this case, the second element of the paradigm "talk-talk" carries an intensified meaning in relation to the first. We can also talk about repetition with an adverb-intensifier, as in the case of - *Is John ready? Really ready?*
- 2) exclamatory sentences with an initial pronoun or adverbial component like - *What a wicked woman!* The degree of intensity of the statement is enhanced not only by the initial what, but also by the semantics of wicked. The St. Petersburg Grammar School team interprets this case as an example in which "the emotionality of the utterance is not only created by the "imposition" of a specific exclamatory intonation," but is defined "as a structural scheme in which emotionality is already embedded" [2];
- 3) Pleonastic constructions are represented in collocations such as *horror of horrors* and *wonder of wonders*, where an intensifying effect is created by the reduplication of a neutral word.

Conclusion

To summarize all of the above, intensification is a complex functional-semantic category, which is in close relations with related categories and serves to strengthen a statement or its part. Both quantity and quality can be subjected to intensification. This category manifests itself at phonetic (graphic representation), morphological, lexical, syntactic and textual linguistic levels:

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