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ОСОБЕННОСТИ ВЕРБАЛИЗАЦИИ КОНЦЕПТА "БОЛЬ" / "PAIN" В АНГЛОЯЗЫЧНЫХ ИНТЕРНЕТ-СООБЩЕНИЯХ

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PECULIARITIES OF PAIN VERBALIZATION IN INTERNET MESSAGES IN ENGLISH

Аннотация. В статье предпринята попытка описать языковые средства, которые используются для передачи болевых ощущений от первого и третьего лица единственного числа. Материалом послужили англоязычные сообщения интернет-форумов здоровья, которые автор охарактеризовал с точки зрения структуры и используемых лексических единиц и проследил различия в вербализации боли человеком, непосредственно её испытывающим, и человеком, который описывает болевые ощущения другого. Эти вопросы ещё не стали предметом лингвистического исследования. При описании чужой боли адресант пытается изменить перспективу речи: описать чужую боль, сравнив её со своей (*я знаю / мне знакомы эти ощущения*), либо абстрагироваться от чужой боли и передать её со слов экспериенцера (*я пересказываю*), либо описать чужую боль, ссылаясь на своё собственное восприятие (*я вижу*). Таким образом, по отношению к говорящему, все глаголы, используемые для описания боли, были разделены на три группы.

Ключевые слова: боль, вербализация, форум, первое лицо единственного числа, третье лицо единственного числа.

Abstract. The article presents an attempt to describe the language means used to convey pain from the first and the third person singular. On the basis of the Internet health forum messages the peculiarities of the structure and the language of pain description were analyzed and the differences in the verbalization of pain by the person experiencing it and the person describing the pain of another person were traced. Verbalizing pain from the third person singular, the author feels uncomfortable and tries to change the perspective and either to describe somebody's pain as the pain he would feel in the same situation (*I know this pain / I have experienced it*) or to abstract from somebody's pain and report it, referring to the words of the person in pain (*I retell the words of another person*) or to describe somebody's pain referring to his own perception (*I see / observe what another person feels*). Therefore all the verbs used to express pain were divided into three groups.

Key words: pain, verbalization, health forum, first person singular, third person singular.

Modern linguistics has a tendency of investigating the human element in the language. Special attention is paid to human feelings, emotions, sensations and the way they are being described. Pain, as well as other feelings and emotions, has frequently become the object of research. The investigation of pain language has been carried out by M. Halliday [2], Ch. Lascaratou [4], F. Overlach [6], V. Britsyn, E. Rakhilina, T. Reznikova, G. Yavorska [1], who worked with pain metaphors in English, Greek, Russian, German and other languages. These researches argue, that there are only some basic verbs that describe pain, all the other words are metaphorical. Though linguo-pragmatic peculiarities of the way people describe their own pain and the pain of another person can also be of great interest. This paper

will present the study of the linguo-pragmatic aspect of pain conceptualization and differences in verbalization of pain language from the first and the third person singular in particular. We believe that with the change of perspective from the first to the third person singular the way and the language used to verbalize pain experience change as well.

Methodology

In order to analyze the way people speak about pain the data of English Internet health forums were used [5]. Internet forums are becoming increasingly popular among those people who want to share their feelings and their pain, due to the fact that it is easier to write your feelings down than to speak them aloud to someone else. 100 messages depicting pain from the first and the third person singular were randomly chosen. Fifty of them present the description of pain from the first person singular (*I* - perspective) and fifty – from the third person singular (*he / she* - perspective). It is worth noting that in Internet there are more *I*-perspective messages than *he/she*-perspective, due to the pragmatic factors that it is easier to speak about your own pain than the pain of another person. According to E. Husserl, the perception, including the feeling of pain, is absolutely obvious only as the actual experience of experiencing person [3]. L. Wittgenstein describes the interrelation of pain and language on the basis of his concept of ‘private language’. Thus, for Wittgenstein pain is a private sensation, because “only I can know whether I am really in pain; another person can only surmise it” [7].

The collected material was analyzed in terms of the structure and the language of the messages.

Results and Discussion

The English language describes pain as a possession, using the possessive pronouns *my*, *his*, *her*, etc. M. Halliday argues that such possession can be owned (*to have pain*), received (*to get pain*) or lost (*my pains disappeared*). But, unlike any other possessions that the person

tries to preserve for himself, in case with pain, he tries to get rid of it, although it is actually impossible [2]. Moreover, in the messages, where the pain is described from the *I*-perspective, ‘my pain’ (thus, ‘my possession’) is used as the opposition to ‘your pain’ (thus, ‘your possession’): *I have been experiencing similar to your shooting pains for the last few weeks. My pains seem to start behind the upper right part of my nose and go behind my right eye to my forehead* (www.ehealthforum.com).

In the description of pain from the *he/she*-perspective there is no such opposition. Possessive pronouns are used to identify the person, experiencing pain, and to describe his/her feelings: *His pain is so bad he has black outs* (www.ehealthforum.com).

The structure of the Internet health forum messages

The structure of the Internet health forum messages is relatively free. It implies three parts: greeting, stating of the problem and conclusion. Greeting in the Internet forum message depends on its addressee. There are two possible variants: 1) the sender of the message does not know the addressee of the message. He appeals to any forum members willing to read the message and share their personal experience. In this case typical greetings are *Hello! Hi! Hello everyone!*. Using these forms the sender implies that all the health forum members are one friendly family, called to support and help each other, thus the indefinite pronoun *everyone* means every single member of this friendly family – the health forum. 2) The sender knows the addressee of the message (usually it is a doctor), because there is the information about him on the home page. In this case the typical greetings are formal (*Good evening, Dr. Ketch*), implying the respect and trust to the person who has already got some achievements in the field of medicine.

After the greeting the sender presents his problem, that is, describes his pain, its character, localization and so on. The majority of the messages do not contain the sender’s personal

information (name, age, etc.), because the author does not consider it to be necessary. The first place of the message is occupied by the description of the pain – the problem that bothers the sender the most – all the rest is not so important.

The opposite situation can be observed in the messages from the *he/she*-perspective. The sender does not only state the personal data of the one feeling pain (age, weight, health), but also presents their relations (brother, son, daughter, wife, etc.): *My husband who is 25 and is in pretty good health has been complaining about a dull ache in his heart region off and on for the past week* (www.ehealthforum.com).

The pain messages from the *I*-perspective are normally more informative, emotional, containing many pain descriptions and characteristics, using a lot of medical terms. While the pain messages from the *he/she*-perspective contain a lot of references to the words and feelings of the person in pain (*he/she says, complains, tells me, claims...*).

Speaking about his own pain the person concentrates on it and tries to explain it in detail in order to receive a piece of good advice. Thus, a lot of adjectives and participles are used: *Recently I started getting extremely **painful, sharp shooting pains** in the right side of my head / temple area down to my ear* (www.ehealthforum.com).

Describing the pain of the third person the author concentrates on the feelings of that person, appeals to them: *My wife has been having pain in her throat for some time now. It hurts when she swallows and sometimes for no reason at all. I see her noticing the pain often in the morning* (www.ehealthforum.com).

The final part of the message contains mostly questions, based on the information stated above, and calls for help. The senders of the messages do not normally use the standard farewell forms, such as *Goodbye*, due to the fact that they are not leaving in the hope to receive answers, comments to their questions. Sometimes the sender apologizes for the length of his post and thanks to everybody who has read it.

Pain description language

For pain description in English health forum messages the word 'pain' is more preferable compared to its synonyms 'ache' and 'hurt'. In fifty messages from *I*-perspective the noun 'pain' was used 69 times, compared to the noun 'ache' – 6 times and 'hurt' was used only as the verb (4 times): *I have a slight **pain** in the lower ribcage and a shooting **pain** every now and then in the heart area* (www.ehealthforum.com).

Describing pain from the *he/she*-perspective the authors of the messages used the noun 'pain' 46 times, 'ache' – 5 times and 'hurt' was used only as the verb (7 times). Among other words that were used in the Internet health forum messages to present pain were adjectives 'sore' (*I*-perspective – 5 times, *he/she* perspective – 4 times) and 'painful' (0 and 3 times retrospectively).

To express pain in the Internet health forum messages the constructions with the verb *to have* are mostly used (15 cases in the messages from the *I*-perspective and 20 – in the case of *he/she*-perspective). Therefore the pain is conceptualized as the possession (see M. Halliday [2]), but the 'possessing of pain' in English can be described in terms of process that started in the past and continues up to now (due to the Present Perfect): *I **have been having** the sharp pain on the right side of my head for a few years* (www.ehealthforum.com). The other verbs used to describe pain in English messages from *I*-perspective are the following:

- ✓ *to experience* (10 cases): *I have been experiencing a strange pain in my right calf muscle for the past few days;*
- ✓ *to get* (7 cases): *I also get sharp pains;*
- ✓ *to feel* (pain is a feeling) (5 cases): *I have been feeling what seems to be heart pains;*
- ✓ *to struggle* (pain is an enemy) (4 cases): *I have been struggling with this pain for almost a year;*
- ✓ *to notice* (1 case), *to become aware of* (1 case): *I have recently become aware of a dull ache in my center/left chest;*
- ✓ *to be* (in passive constructions) (1 case): *There was a lot of initial pain;*

In the pain description from *he/she*-perspective the following verbs are used:

✓ *to have* (20 cases): *My 2 year old son has a pain in his leg;*

✓ *to complain* (5 cases): *My husband has been complaining about a dull ache in his heart region;*

✓ *to say* (5 cases): *she said that she has been feeling pain;*

✓ *to tell sb.* (4 cases): *she tells me that it's a stinging/ burning pain;*

✓ *to experience* (4 cases): *She is experiencing the pain mainly after eating;*

✓ *to get* (2 cases): *My daughter keeps getting pain in her left side;*

✓ *to suffer from* (2 cases): *My daughter is suffering from growing pains;*

✓ *to see sb.* (2 cases): *I see her noticing the pain often in the morning;*

✓ *to describe* (1 case): *He describes this pain as a stinging pain in his ear;*

✓ *to feel* (1 case): *she has been feeling pain in her tummy;*

✓ *to worry* (1 case): *He is worried about this pain.*

The verbs that describe pain from the third person singular can be divided into three following groups:

1) the verbs with the help of which the author of the message reports the feelings of another person identifying them with his own feelings (I know this feelings / I have experienced them): *to have pain, to get pain, to feel pain, to experience pain, to suffer from pain.*

2) the verbs with the help of which the author reports the feelings of another person from his / her own words (I retell): *to complain of / about, to say, to tell, to describe;*

3) the verbs with the help of which the author reports the feelings of another person from his own perception (I see): *to see.*

The verbs of the first group can be used to report pain from the first and the third person sin-

gular, while the verbs of the second and the third groups can be used only to express pain from the third person singular.

This study shows that there are some differences while communicating pain from the first and the third person singular. For the speaker it is more comfortable to speak about his / her own pain. He uses a lot of different words, especially adjectives and participles, that describe the quality of the pain he / she feels. Speaking about the pain of another person the one is not so comfortable. He is unable to feel what the other person feels. So he tries to change the perspective and either to describe somebody's pain as the pain he would feel in the same case or as he believes somebody feels experiencing this pain (using the verbs of the first and the third groups) or to abstract from somebody's pain and to report it referring to the words of the person in pain (the verbs of the second group).

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