

# The discrediting of a linguistic persona in the linguistic space of the communicative act

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**Abstract:** *The research is devoted to detecting of communicative-pragmatic ways and means of expressing discrediting of a linguistic persona. Stylistic devices, rules, specifics of tactics and strategies of discrediting have been identified and have been described in this study. Methods and means of expressing the discrediting of a linguistic persona have been represented here. It provides a detailed classification of direct and indirect means of expressing active and passive discrediting in Russian speech. In this research, the concept of “discrediting a linguistic persona” has been explained as a state of confrontation between two parties, in which each party acts to the damage of the opposite party consciously and actively, explaining its actions by verbal and pragmatic means. The complex of external and internal factors that determine the destructive behavior of participants in a discrediting communicative situation is singling out.*

**Keywords:** *pragmalinguistics, verbal aggression, discrediting of a linguistic persona, destructive behaviour, circumstances of the origin verbal aggression, verbal discrimination.*

## I. Introduction

Communication and interaction with other people is an inherent part of modern life. Depending on a personal experience, knowledge, skills and worldviews, a person responds to a message addressed to him in a form of a word or an expression. A compliment, a request, a wish, sometimes a mockery, a threat, an offensive term are usually used to express specific attitude, emotions. A mockery, a threat, an offensive term implement a speech act of discrediting a linguistic persona. Implementations of discrediting a linguistic persona in Russian speech, have many semantic-pragmatical shades, which depend on an existing situation, a degree of a damage caused, an expected perlocative effect and personality characteristics of communicants; lack of knowledge about semantic field of discrediting communicative situations, inaccurate ideas about ways to overcome or prevent verbal aggression that leads to communicative failures and to a conflict interaction.

The relevance of this topic is determined by the fact that discrediting of a linguistic persona hasn't been studied enough and due to the necessity of description, development and structure of communicative-pragmatic characteristics of the communicative situation of a persona's discrediting. Usually this definition is considered within a framework of political discourse, which significantly narrows the boundaries of this phenomenon. Such acts are quite widespread in a speech culture and they are found not only in the field of political rhetoric, so the necessity to study the phenomenon of discrediting in a day-to-day communication raises no doubts. The discrediting of a linguistic personality is considered as a type of psychological or speech interaction.

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The purpose of the research is to identify the specificity and the description of the main methods and means of representing the discrediting of a linguistic persona in a communicative interaction, in building of an entire system for describing a discreditable speech act.

The achievement of intended goals implies following tasks:

to determine verbal / speech aggression as a communicative-pragmatic phenomenon; to identify the connection between verbal aggression and discrediting of a linguistic persona; a comprehensive analysis of typical strategies of discrediting a linguistic persona; identification of patterns of correlation strategies, tactics, methods of implementing discrediting of a linguistic persona; the consideration of variety of means of expression the discrediting in Russian speech; characteristics of methods and means of expression the direct discrediting of a linguistic persona; the characteristic of methods and means of expression indirect discrediting of a linguistic persona.

In our research, we take an integrated approach to explore a communicative situation that discredits the personality, which allows us to determine the functioning mechanisms of this phenomenon, to consider pragmatic and linguistic features of expressing the semantics of discrediting in the unity of the social, psychological and linguistic aspects.

To achieve the goal and to solve specific tasks we have used the following

## **II. Methods of linguistic research:**

theoretical (analysis of studies on pragmalinguistics), descriptive (identification and systematization of pragmatic indicators of discrediting a linguistic persona), contextual and component analysis (the research of representative methods and means of expressing discrediting in the context of a speech situation with taking into account social and psychological attitudes), partial stylistic analysis (the definition of emotionally expressive and functional-stylistic connotation components of the utterance), descriptive method (systematizing, generalizing the results of observations).

The scientific-theoretical significance of this research is that it provides a certain input to the development of the doctrine of strategies and tactics for overcoming ineffective communication, which creates the discrediting of a linguistic persona and it causes communicative damage to the interlocutor. The research of the phenomenon of "discrediting a linguistic persona" allows us to evaluate the features of the process effective and ineffective communication comprehensively and objectively.

The practical significance consists of an integrated characteristic of communicative-pragmatic and linguistic means of expressing the discrediting of a linguistic persona, in directional detection of correctional and preventive work in order to prevent verbal aggression in a discrediting discourse.

The verbal aggression prevents the implementation of the main tasks of effective verbal communication: it impedes full exchange of information and hampers the perception and the understanding between interlocutors, makes the development of a common interaction strategy impossible. Aggression is considered as a means of expressing negative feelings, emotions, it is a response to stimuli, and it can also be as a defense and self-affirmation mechanism [8].

Many researchers note the difficulties associated with the interpretation of the concepts of "verbal aggression", because there is no single behavior repertoire that reflects an incitement to aggressive verbal interaction. This term is used for a wide variety of verbal actions, very heterogeneous in motivation, situations of demonstration, forms of verbal realization, intensional directivity [12, p. 13].

By analyzing linguistic works, which devoted to a verbal aggression, we can talk about two approaches to this phenomenon: psycholinguistic and ethicolinguistic [1]. In the psycholinguistic aspect, the understanding of aggression is completely based on psychology, where verbal aggression is considered as expression of negative emotions in relation to another object that expressed verbally; from the point of view of communicative linguistics, it is important how it was said and what for [2].

There is a definition of verbal aggression in psycholinguistics - "the expression of negative feelings both through form (quarrel, scream, screech), and through the content of verbal answers (threat, curses, profanity)" [10, p. 10]. The psychological interpretation of the aggressive situation is defined as: "Verbal aggression is a form of verbal behavior that aimed at insulting and at harming a person intentionally, group of people, an organization or a society as a whole." Verbal aggression is motivated by an aggressive speaker's behaviour and often pursuing a goal - to cause or maintain an aggressive behaviour of the addressee "[6, p. 562].

In the ethicolinguistic approach, stylistically labeled linguistic means are taken into account, therefore, verbal aggression should be considered taking into account their role and function in a communicative act. In linguistics, verbal aggression is considered as communication with the intention to cause offence, to express adverse, negative emotions, feelings by verbal way through rude, inappropriate speech forms. Verbal aggression at the level of negative emotions and feelings appears as aggressive verbal behavior - "not enough of conscious activity, manifested in patterns and stereotypes of actions which were learned by a person either on the basis of imitation of other people's patterns and stereotypes, or on the basis of personal experience" [12, p. 9].

A deliberate, targeted, proactive verbal attack is an aggressive speech activity and it is defined as "consciously motivated purposeful human activity" [12, p. 9]. It is a kind of verbal aggression that is the most dangerous in the communicative regard, since it is a thoughtful, planned and prepared speech act, the purpose of which is to inflict communicative harm to the recipient.

The following conditions for the occurrence of verbal aggression can be emphasised.

1) negative communicative intention of a speaker, which is conscious and targeted: the speaker has the aim to insult and humiliate an opponent.

2) inconsistency of an utterance to the nature of communication and the "image of the recipient" (for example, the slangy message in an formal setting; addressing only to one interlocutor in a group communication; offensive hints to the interlocutor):

"I am twenty-three years old," Ivan started talking excitedly, "and I will file a complaint against you all." And against you, crum, in particular ! - he reacted personally to Ryukhin (Bulgakov) - the addressant is trying to explain to strangers that he is not crazy. Because no one hears him, he moves to a verbal abuse, at the same time he singles out one of the interlocutors from the group and begin to discredit him, using a negative intensifier (crum).

3) negative emotional backlashes of the addressee to this statement (resentment, anger, irritation) and responses that reflect them (accusation, rebuke, refusal, expression of protest, disagreement, response insult).

Thus, the analysis of the conditions for the appearance of verbal aggression allows us to determine a number of reasons that can cause verbal aggression:

1) hostility towards the object of aggression, caused by a number of subjective, objective or contextual reasons;

2) provocative actions from the part of the object of aggression, including aggressive verbal behavior;

3) contravention by the object of aggression of conceptual and contextual norms of communication, unacceptable for the communicator;

4) the low level of verbal and communicative culture of the subject of utterance.

Verbal aggression can be defined as the usage of verbal means that are contrary to the institutional and contextual norms of communication, with purpose of causing harm or damage to the communicative position and self-esteem of another person. One of the ways to realization of the verbal aggression is the discrediting of a linguistic persona in a communicative interaction. The meaning of the same utterance will vary significantly, depending on the verbal situation in which it is included. In this regard, direct and indirect verbal-aggressive acts stand out. In direct (explicit) acts, the addressee insults and threatens openly. In case that aggression in speech is presented implicitly (indirectly, disguised), we can talk about indirect verbal-aggressive acts.

The discrediting of a linguistic persona can be also expressed directly or indirectly, depending on the internal communicative-pragmatic content of a verbal act. The discrediting of a linguistic persona, just like an attack strategy, is an offensive type of verbal aggression [11].

The function of discrediting lies in the desire to lower the status of the opponent, in his overthrow. The verbal aggression is an ethically unstable personal's behavior that aimed at reducing the social status of the interlocutor and his submission, at the negative emotional impact. The purpose of discrediting of a linguistic persona is to undermine trust in someone or to a position that is defended by an opponent, diminution of a dignity, prestige, authority [3].

In modern pragmalinguistics, the following types of strategies for verbal behavior in the framework of communicative aggression are described: 1) a libel - the public dissemination of information that discredits someone; 2) a verbal discrimination - the expression in the speech of one's own distinction and superiority on racial, national, property or other characters; 3) a verbal discrediting – the undermining of authority, the diminishing of the value of someone, the undermining trust; 4) a verbal insinuation - the creation of prerequisites for a negative perception of someone's social image [7].

The discrediting can be considered in the framework of the global strategy in the field of the linguistic manipulation, marking it as a “game for a lowering” [4, p. 160].

Undoubtedly, one of the strongest conflicting strategies for verbal behavior is a discrediting strategy that is implemented through various tactics: accusing, exposing, disclosing negative facts, insulting (indirect insulting “cast a shadow on someone”), hint, dramatization, irony (ridicules , mockeries), ignoring a person, interrupting, compromising, threatening, rudeness. Reporting about a negative assessment, negative impact on the feelings of the addressee, an intention to humiliate, nettle, represent in a ridiculous way is the communicative task of the discrediting of a linguistic persona .

In a discrediting macro-verbal act, the speaker expresses a negative assessment of the other person's actions or qualities, that aimed at representing the addressee in an unseemly light and, as a result, to undermine the trust of others, to derogate his dignity, authority and awareness of own importance, or reduce his self-esteem. The choice of verbal means of expressing discredit is determined by a pragmatic function.

However, the detection of emotional text's components occurs with the help of various types of attributes. As an important feature of the linguistic means of expressing inner experience, the insufficiency of one linguistic means for conveying complex emotional states is not enough, necessity of actualization in the text a whole complex of means for transmitting negative emotions to a text, a uniqueness of which is found, first of all, in a diversity and richness of linguistic means of expressing them with appropriate vocabulary, phraseological constructions, special intonation, word order. In this regard, connotative graphic means are widely used in writing, which compensates for the insufficiency of traditional means of expression. Such graphic means are hyphenation, doubling (tripling) graphemes, writing a word or a sentence in a special font that differs from the font of the entire text (italics, underlining), ellipsis, dash. Repeated interjections and exclamation marks indicate negative emotions, nervousness,

aggressive mood of the interlocutors. The abundance of punctuation marks conveys a high degree of the emotional breadth of the speech.

*And you are thinking: why is he looking at? What did he not see there? He is just standing and standing, and what he is standing for he might not even know himself. I shout:*

*- Hey!*

*- Wut? ..*

*- Nothing! This is wut. Wut and wut, wutting-man ... Why are you repeating wut and wut?*

*- Wut do you want?*

*- Nothing!*

*- So, keep quiet!*

*- You keep quiet or I'll teach you a lesson!* (Tolstaya) – this dialogue is as close as possible to everyday speech, indicating a low culture of communicants. For an unfriendly, dismissive attitude, incomplete exclamation sentences are used. The interjection “hey” is used as an addressing to the opponent and expresses a dismissive attitude. The pronoun in the indirect case of “wut”, and all kinds of interpretations of it in the form of neologisms: wut and wut, wutting-man is a vivid example of everyday communication, during which new discrediting tokens are created. Wutting (by analogy with a cackling) can be interpreted as “be grumping in vain.” Consequently, wutting-man is an object that is grumping in vain. The desire to calm the interlocutor is realized with the help of the ineffective phase “so, keep quiet”, which is fraught with negative semantics, that causes an opposite negative reaction. This dialogue is ineffective, since not one of the interlocutors reaches the goal, the desire to insult the interlocutor and to put him in his place is being implemented.

If the verbal aggression is strong, the speaker does not hide his desire to insult the opponent, to discredit him then the method of expression will be direct. If the rules of courtesy are followed, and implicit aggression and discrediting of a person are observed (the irony is most often used in such cases), then this is a weak verbal aggression and the way of expressing it is indirect.

The activity and the passivity of aggressive verbal behavior depends on the targeting and awareness of the speaker's actions. Active discrediting will be observed with a targeted desire to insult and humiliate an opponent. Passive discrediting - with the unconscious or the conscious is not enough. Insulting or hurting are not the main goals, it is observed when someone tries to increase one's self-esteem, to assert oneself with one's remark. Here, the discrediting of a linguistic persona rather acts as a way of protection, retraction and justification.

The analysis of the language material made it possible to identify the types of discrediting the linguistic persona:

1. The direct active discrediting – is a verbal humiliation, the insulting a person or a group of persons in order to let out their indignation in the usual form.

2. The indirect (proxy) active discrediting – is the desire to insult, to humiliate, represented by indirect ways of expressing the discrediting by using vocabulary with negative semantics.

3. The direct passive discrediting (an insult like “One yourself...” may serve as a way of expressing it): the addressee does not hide his negative attitude, but discrediting “One yourself...” is a response to an irritant.

4. The indirect passive discrediting through the irony.

In most cases, a complex of methods and means is simultaneously used for expressing the discrediting of a linguistic persona. This is due to the high degree of the emotionality in such communicative act. The direct discrediting of a linguistic persona is an open desire to humiliate, to offend the addressee. This type of discrediting is widespread in the modern life, especially in the areas of everyday and interpersonal communication, but this type

of aggression is commonly used in journalism and in the media. The verbal aggression is a means to take the edge off, and the manifestation of aggression directly depends on the psychological characteristics of the linguistic persona [14]. The following typical means are used to express the direct discrediting:

1. Words with destructive semantics: verbs (beat, kill, injure) and their different variations with prefixes reinforcing this meaning (tear, break) can act as means of expression.
2. Negative semantic constructions (stable expressions, proverbs and sayings).
3. The invective vocabulary: lexical units with the meaning of the activity condemned by society (thief, swindler, scoundrel).
4. Lexical units with a distinctly negative connotation (enemy, racist, etc.).
5. The generic names, correlated with negative evaluative phenomena: nouns denoting animals are most often used: a donkey, a goat, a ram, a pig. Thus, some behavior traits of these animals are attributed to humans. A person who causes irritation, anger, considered dull, stupid is often called a goat.
6. Verbal tokens with negative semantics (escape, steal).
7. Nouns with a negative expressive assessment (bastard, viper).
8. The insulting due to logical opposition ("I" with a "+" sign and another with a "-" sign).
9. An insult based on a negative comparison.

All of the above-described means of expressing discrediting of a linguistic persona are direct, but in most cases they are used in combination with other means. Most frequently, these are intonational methods of expression, this is due to the fact that discredit is one of the ways to relieve tension, and its expression depends on the psycholinguistic features of the linguistic persona [9].

The overt aggression is condemned by society, it means that there are many forms by which they indirectly offend, insult, and humiliate an opponent. The indirect insult allows the speaker not to express a directly negative opinion, but to create a negative background for the perception of information in the statement through an implicit meaning. Means of expression of indirect discrediting a linguistic personality include:

- phrases with the meaning of threat: a threat is used in order to cause the opponent a sense of fear, in other words, to frighten him. Verbs with destructive semantics of threat and physical impact on an object most often act as a means of expression.
- negative attitude, a threat to the opponent emphasize particles
- pseudo-imperative (the imperative form (talk, argue) is used to keep addressee quiet. These forms are similar to the order to take some action, but the function of the pseudo-imperative is in discrediting that negating the importance of the opponent).
- interrogative proposals, the purpose of which is to reproach, to offend the addressee
- ironic attitude to the addressee: (ironic treatment, hyperbolization, allusion).

The discrediting can be expressed in various ways and means, the choice of which depends on the participants of the communicative act, their intentions and characteristics of speech behavior. If the addressee wishes to express his negative attitude towards the addressee indirectly, he uses indirect means and methods, which creates a negative background for perceiving the information in a statement.

### III. Results

The discrediting of a linguistic persona prevents the full exchange of information, complicates the perception and understanding of communication of participants and creates a barrier to successful communicative interaction. One of the ways to implement verbal aggression is to discredit a linguistic persona. Discrediting of a

linguistic persona, like an attack strategy, is an offensive type of verbal aggression. The discrediting is aimed at lowering the opponent's status, at a negative emotional impact. The structure of a discrediting communicative act implies the presence of a communicative situation of discrediting; motives directing messages generated in communication to discredit a person; to the process of material transmission of messages, including methods and means of expressing discredit; at least two communication participants, each of whom uses discrediting for their own purposes.

Depending on the goal, which was set by the addressee, particular strategies of the cognitive, semantic and rhetorical type of discrediting can be singled out. Strategies for discrediting of a linguistic persona are implemented in various speech tactics: accusing, exposing, disclosing negative facts, insulting / indirect insulting, hinting, dramatizing, irony / ridicule / mockery, ignoring a person, interrupting, compromising, threatening, rudeness. The choice of tactics depends on the goal that the speaker sets for himself, and the means of representing the discrediting linguistic personality. The direct insult, labeling, indirect insult, debunking claims are mostly used tactics of discrediting a linguistic persona.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

To express the discrediting of a linguistic persona, a whole complex of methods and means is used. Diversity and richness of language means of expressing discrediting language include appropriate vocabulary, phraseological direct and indirect means of expressing discrediting of a language persona. The direct discrediting is expressed by lexical items with destructive semantics; negative turnovers with negative semantics; invectives; insult due to logical opposition; insult based on negative comparison. The indirect discrediting with concealed nature is used to offend, insult, humiliate. To express a complex inner experience, it is not enough to use one specific linguistic tool, therefore, to transfer the emotional state, a whole complex of tools must be updated. The lexical and grammatical means of expressing discrediting linguistic personality in Russian speech are very diverse. Among the morphological means, the most active are nominal and verbal lexemes with defamatory semantics, expressively colored particles and interjections that enhance the expressive function of statements with the value of discrediting the interlocutor's personality. Among syntactic means, the leading role is given to interrogative and incentive structures, as well as incomplete sentences, since their brevity expresses the emotional side of the statement with greater force. Identified typical ways and means of expressing discrediting linguistic personality are observed both in interpersonal everyday communication, and in official-business interaction, in the media. Discrediting speech acts penetrate into all spheres of life and interfere with the successful communicative interaction of interlocutors.

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