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Empathy in television discourse

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Abstract. Pragmatic-oriented research in modern linguistics is increasing. Notably, the use of the term “empathy,” which has been applied sporadically in the context of pragmatics, draws attention. It is well known that the term “empathy” belongs to the field of psychology. Currently, its usage in psycholinguistics encompasses the scope of cognitive linguistics. Empathy is frequently observed in the products of television discourse and has become a subject of research in this area. From this perspective, it is possible to highlight the need for and relevance of the development of psycholinguistics and fundamental cognitive studies. The content of the article examines the manifestation of empathy in television discourse and its application in relation to the cognitive natural essence of language. The study aims to draw attention to the peculiar emotional states of individuals and the expression of the “language of feelings” in such moments. To achieve effective objectives, the study sets tasks to analyze empathy in television news and the emotional state of recipients during their perception and feeling of television programs, using linguistic (verbal) and non-linguistic (non-verbal) elements. The research results can be included in theoretical studies that integrate cognitive linguistics and psychology. The findings may have a methodological impact on applied linguistics and psychological studies.

Keywords: television discourse, empathy, multimodality, psycholinguistics, cognition, emotion.

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Introduction

With the growing use of digital technologies, the form of media communication is rapidly evolving. The paradigmatic reasons for shifting to the study of the integration of language with information tools have been identified. First, discourse analysts, taking into account today's interactive technologies, are focusing on the emergence of semiotic resources from a semantic perspective. Second, new methodological approaches are being adopted based on multimodal discourse analyses. The application and effectiveness of these approaches are also reflected in the research of foreign scholars, who evaluate multimodality in modern communication from a socio-semiotic perspective [1].

Multimodal analyses have become key to working with information. For instance, new forms of text creation are being implemented comprehensively. It is also worth highlighting the emergence of new communicative-pragmatic approaches to understanding and perceiving texts. Accordingly, the functionality and application of media texts [2], the interrelation of media text and media discourse [3], and issues of media linguistics [4] can be observed in foreign-language research.

For research in this field, linguistic, content-based, discourse, and visual analysis methods are proving increasingly effective. It is well known that communication between people occurs not only through verbal or written texts but also through gestures, movements, facial expressions, glances, tone, as well as various sounds and photographs.

Materials and Methods

Television discourse belongs to the category of complex forms of speech. Speech is a type of purposeful action aimed at the interaction and cognitive mechanisms of communication participants. Television discourse is distinguished by its genre diversity, thematic, structural-compositional, and stylistic features. The function of modern television is manifested through its language. Therefore, the informational function of television discourse is characterized as follows:

- In terms of perception, speech on television is conducted in both oral and written forms (e.g., subtitles, advertising text, running text);
- Television discourse includes oral transpositional forms (e.g., the speech of television hosts and announcers, the speech of characters in telefilms);
- Speech acts in television discourse contribute to the development of communication within the television space, capturing the audience's attention and enhancing their cognitive interest.

Thus, television discourse is a multi-component model involving not only journalists and operators but also specialists in various fields. By evaluating television discourse from linguistic and psychological perspectives, it is possible to observe the level and manner in which communicative acts are implemented. Any type of communication, including television communication, consists of the following elements: the sender (the one who delivers or disseminates the information) and the recipient (the receiver or consumer).

In one foreign study, the role of the television audience in television discourse and the functions of the sender and recipient were analyzed [5, 10]. Research in the field of mass communication over the last decade has been devoted to modeling the functions of mass communication, manipulation technologies, and strategies for influencing audiences.

Researcher E.G. Larina suggests that television discourse can be considered as an integral speech act within television [6]. In communication contexts, speech emerges from the interaction of people. The concept of the speech genre was first introduced by M.M. Bakhtin in 1929 in his work *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. He categorized speech genres into everyday, rhetorical, scientific, and literary. Based on these parameters, he further divided genres into primary (simple speech genres) and secondary (complex speech genres) [7, 205].

General Overview of Research

In the study of mass communication, two key aspects are emphasized. First, the material-logical, factual, or intellectual, descriptive, objective, conceptual, and factual information. Second, the pragmatic, evaluative, and subjective information.

The pragmatics of television discourse manifests in three aspects in terms of speech acts. First, the speaker's relationship to the symbols they use. Second, the impact of speech on the listener, specifically the influence on the addressee through the "magic of words," including the strategies and tactics employed in communication. Third, the consideration of the background knowledge between communicators. Background knowledge is reflected not only in linguistic awareness and the meaning of language symbols but also in human behavior and social norms. The system of background knowledge in an individual unfolds during meaningful spoken interaction, dialogue, or conversation. It is also well known that during such conversations, the emotional state of the individual plays a crucial role, linking this phenomenon directly to the fields of linguistics and psychology.

In contemporary science, the study of language in conjunction with psychology has paved the way for fundamental research. According to E. Orazalieva, the stages of research in this direction include the emergence of the young grammarians' school in the 1880s, the development of psycholinguistics in the mid-20th century, and the research in cognitive linguistics starting in the 1980s [8, 76].

The content and expression of human emotions and feelings in language vary greatly. Vocabulary expressing an individual's psychological state can be classified into two categories: linguistic (verbal) and non-linguistic (non-verbal).

In Kazakh linguistics, scholars such as B. Momynova and S. Beysembayeva have noted the role and functions of non-linguistic means of communication, emphasizing that these, like linguistic means, play a unique role in facilitating communication [9, 7].

The delivery of information on television demonstrates its multimodal nature. The outcome of television information often elicits empathy in the audience. Consequently, the issues related to empathy can also be studied as part of the pragmatic aspect of television discourse. Empathy, a term rooted in psychology, is observed at the intersection of psychology, pedagogy, philosophy, and linguistics.

To begin, the term "empathy" refers to genuinely experiencing and sharing another person's emotional state, understanding it, and providing effective support. In the context of communication, empathy reflects mutual understanding, interaction, and relationships between people. Scholarly conclusions (e.g., I.M. Yussupov, E.I. Rogov) highlight that empathy contributes to the balance of interpersonal relationships [10].

Empathy is the ability of individuals to understand others and exhibit empathy in the process of interpersonal communication.

There are assertions that empathy has evolved throughout human history and continues to develop [11]. The concept of empathy began to gain widespread use in the last century. The term was introduced by E. Titchener in 1909. Based on the theoretical foundations of the feeling

of liking, Titchener described empathy as encompassing emotional responses, cognitive understanding through comparison and analogy, and preventive measures to alleviate the causes of distress in others. Earlier, in 1905, Sigmund Freud was among the first to define empathy, stating that it involves placing oneself in the patient's position, taking into account their psychological state [12].

In Russian scholarship, the application of the term empathy has also drawn attention. Among the researchers in this field are S.L. Rubinstein and T.P. Gavrilova, who view empathy as a characteristic of an individual; P.V. Simonov, who sees it as a form of special attention to others; S.B. Borisenko, who considers it an element of an individual's holistic structure; and O.I. Tsvetkova and G.F. Mikhhalchenko, who associate empathy with dialogic interaction and behavioral situations. Additionally, researchers such as Y.N. Emelyanov, L.A. Petrovskaya, S.V. Petrushin, and I.V. Bachkov regard empathy as a component of communicative competence and the ability to express indirect emotional opinions about others' feelings in communication processes.

In discussing a model of empathic processes, G.F. Mikhhalchenko highlights that the manifestation of empathy in communication is expressed through verbal and non-verbal interactions. He notes, "Without the communicative component, empathy cannot be discussed" [13].

Information is both visual and auditory. The linguistic scholar and Japanese researcher Suzumi Kuno was one of the first to study the connection between the term empathy and text. His 1975 article, *"Empathy and Syntax,"* and its third part, published in 1976 under the title *"Subject, Topic, and Linguistic Empathy,"* link empathy to the linguistic characteristics of communicators [14].

For example, the manifestations of empathy are clearly observed in the delivery of television news within television discourse. Scholars emphasize the various functions of empathy, recognizing it as one of the defining factors of behavior and as a unique emotional form of cognition. T.P. Gavrilova outlines the main characteristics of empathy as follows:

- Understanding the emotions and needs of one's conversational partner;
- Experiencing an event;
- Establishing or detaching from an affective connection with another, including the situation of other groups of people;
- Serving as a professional quality for psychotherapists [15].

The components of empathy can be categorized as:

- Emotional: Recognizing and accepting various emotional states of others, passive sympathy, and effective initiatives;
- Cognitive: The ability to understand thoughts, feelings, and actions of a partner, as well as to comprehend their inner world and show compassionate understanding;
- Behavioral: Mastering communication types, alleviating the psychological condition of another person, and providing assistance.

Empathy plays a significant role in resolving inner conflicts and emotional struggles. From a psychoanalytic perspective, empathy refers to understanding and adequately responding to a patient's feelings and needs. In psychoanalysis, empathy is viewed as a means of focusing on and exploring the patient's inner world.

Empathy is the ability to immerse oneself in another person's cognitive world, to understand, and to feel their emotional state. Derived from the Latin *empathia* (sensitivity), empathy signifies the capacity to comprehend the inner experiences and conditions of others and to show compassion. In psychology, this concept is recognized as a distinctive and frequently occurring human feeling. The manifestation of empathy is reflected in expressions of compassion for

someone's sorrow or difficulties, as well as in experiencing another person's severe psychological state as though it were one's own.

The expression of empathy is said to depend on a person's individuality, gender, age, and professional activities. In intercultural communication, personal interests, temperament, and perspectives also play significant roles. Furthermore, an empathetic individual must prioritize linguistic etiquette. At its core, linguistic etiquette involves politeness as a moral and ethical principle. Linguistic etiquette within speech acts encompasses the constructive mutual connection in interpersonal relationships. Various forms of etiquette-based speech acts are manifested through utterances. Empathetic communication often includes expressions of gratitude, support, regret, and other related sentiments.

During the study, the observation method revealed that verbs representing states and physiological processes associated with television discourse empathy, such as *"crying," "holding hands,"* and *"remaining silent,"* frequently appear in interactions between the sender (journalist) and the receiver (character). These emotional units highlight the empathetic connection and serve as indicators of emotional engagement within the discourse.

Results and Discussion

The focus of contemporary linguistics combines several paradigms, such as cognitive, communicative, pragmatic, categorical, and cultural. It is well established that emotional factors play a significant role in communication. In television communication, the pragmatic purpose of a communicative situation is determined by the premises of both the addressee and the sender. Human emotions are predominantly conveyed through language, which reflects various emotional states and serves as a medium for the expression of mental conditions like emotions. In television discourse, empathy is demonstrated through facial expressions (mimicry), full-body movements (pantomime), voice modulation, intonation changes, and even physiological processes like crying.

Journalists can maintain control over their interviewees' emotions and possess communicative skills and abilities essential for emotional speech acts. They master implicit forms of delivering or receiving emotional messages, achieving positive results in the process.

In Kazakh communication culture, emotions are often expressed through culturally unique linguistic units, including interjections, proverbs, and idiomatic expressions. Additionally, in television discourse, empathy manifests through the emotional states and the "language of feelings" between the sender (journalist) and the receiver (interviewee). This is evident in consoling and encouraging phrases. For instance, in the talk show *"Dau-Damaisyz - Documentless Tragedy"* [16], empathy is clearly observed in the dialogue between the journalist and the interviewee:

- Journalist: "How are you feeling? How is your health? At times of severe illness, you must have felt as though you were stranded alone on a ship. Every time you called me, I could sense the sorrow in your voice." [16].

Empathy is also evident in the daily news broadcasts. The structure of domestic television news content reflects specific criteria prioritizing topics in the following order: official news, issue-oriented news (e.g., individual achievements), and other stories.

Modern requirements for writing news content include accuracy, reliability, immediacy, objectivity, neutrality, and brevity. News content avoids personal opinions or criticism, presenting only facts, leaving it up to the audience to form their own views and opinions. The nature of television news discourse and its unique characteristics have also been discussed in international studies [17].

From the recipient's perspective, evaluating news content involves expressing critical opinions, presenting personal views on events, providing analytical assessments, and using expres-

sive language. A newsreader's attitude toward the news becomes evident in how they read it, their emotions, and how they convey it during the broadcast.

Three different styles of presenting news content are identified:

1. Neutral Presentation: Common in many news broadcasts, where the presenter delivers information without displaying emotions.

2. Aggressive Presentation: Used for unprecedented or sensational news stories, where the delivery style is expressive, assertive, or even harsh. Example: *"A crash investigation: The black box from the plane that crashed in Aktau has been handed over to Brazilian experts. Why was this decision made?"* [18].

3. Empathetic Presentation: The presenter demonstrates empathy for the events or individuals involved, acting as a supportive figure. Example: *"The black box from the Aktau plane crash has been handed over to Brazilian experts. Why was this decision made?"* In this case, empathy is conveyed through linguistic expressions of compassion.

The criteria for presenting television news include:

- Attention-Grabbing Criterion: Ensuring the audience's immediate attention through unique elements like musical screen savers, which are distinctive for each program.

- Emotional Resonance Criterion: Maintaining the audience's engagement and encouraging them to revisit specific news broadcasts.

Empathy is also prominent in television interviews. During interviews, the host (sender) often becomes an "ego-center," showcasing their ability to understand and empathize with the emotional state of the interviewee. This is particularly evident in programs dealing with topics like hardships or illnesses. For example, empathy is vividly displayed in episodes of the program *TeleDäriger* (TeleDoctor), such as *"Special Care for Special Children"* ([YouTube](#)) and *"Brain Cancer"* ([YouTube](#)) [19].

Empathy, one of the key elements in deepening audience engagement, plays a significant role in enhancing the overall media consumption experience [20], [21]. This engagement through empathy or empathic engagement might result in an enhanced media experience, blurring the lines between the viewer and the character, thus enriching the audience's experience and expanding their appreciation for the diverse perspectives and experiences presented in the media [22].

Since television discourse is a category that observes the orthoepic expression of a real language. The study of television as a clear manifestation of linguistic media is considered relevant [23].

In these programs, empathy is observed in the host's verbal expressions of sympathy and shared concern for callers' emotional states, exemplifying the integration of empathy into television discourse.

Conclusion

Contemporary linguistic research is increasingly grounded in anthropocentric approaches. By analyzing the emotional state and linguistic expressions of individuals within communication, their worldview, readiness for interaction, and recognition of values come into focus. Empathy in television discourse is also evident through the use of linguacultural units.

Emotional evaluation and emotionally expressive language in media discourse influence the audience, shaping public consciousness and public opinion. Emotion is a reflection of human essence and cognition.

Today, people's perception and thought processes are evolving. Accordingly, the impact of media on audiences, its ability to shape or even transform their views, becomes increas-

ingly apparent. In psycholinguistics, one of the primary indicators of emotional vocabulary is evaluation. This evaluative aspect is also prevalent in the media, underscoring the relevance of studying psychology in conjunction with other disciplines, which has opened new avenues for fundamental research.

For instance, the content and expression of human emotions and feelings in language are diverse. Vocabulary reflecting a person's psychological state can be categorized into linguistic (verbal) and non-linguistic (non-verbal) forms. Studies in this area reveal that, in communication, non-verbal means often outweigh verbal ones. This observation is also evident in the analysis of empathy within television discourse, the subject of this research.

Empathy in television discourse manifests as additional information in communicative interactions. It often complements linguistic means, clarifying specific meanings. In television discourse, the proper use of emotive and evaluative words fosters mutual understanding and respect among communicators.

The study of linguistic personas in television discourse necessitates an examination of the addressee's linguistic abilities and their capacity to generate and interpret emotional and evaluative structures. This research highlights the significance of empathy in fostering meaningful communication and shaping media influence.

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Теледискурстағы эмпатия

Аңдатпа. Қазіргі тіл біліміндегі прагматикалық бағыттағы зерттеулер көбейіп келеді. Бір қызығы, назар прагматика контекстінде анда-санда қолданылатын “эмпатия” терминінің

қолданылуына аударылады. «Эмпатия» термині психология саласына жататыны белгілі. Қазіргі уақытта оны психолингвистикада қолдану когнитивтік лингвистиканың аясын қамтиды. Эмпатия – бұл басқа адамның танымдық әлеміне ену арқылы жанашырлық пен түсіністік таныту қабілеті. Эмпатия теледискурс өнімдерінде жиі байқалады және осы саладағы зерттеу тақырыбына айналды. Осы тұрғыдан алғанда, психолингвистика мен іргелі когнитивті зерттеулерді дамытудың қажеттілігі мен өзектілігін атап өтуге болады. Мақаланың мазмұны теледискурстағы эмпатияның көрінісін және оның тілдің танымдық табиғи мәніне қатысты қолданылуын зерттейді. Зерттеу жеке тұлғалардың ерекше эмоционалдық күйлеріне және осындай сәттерде «сезім тілінің» көрінісіне назар аударуға бағытталған. Тиімді мақсаттарға жету үшін зерттеу барысында лингвистикалық (вербалды) және лингвистикалық емес (бейвербалды) элементтерді қолдана отырып, теледидар жаңалықтарындағы эмпатияны және алушылардың теледидарлық бағдарламаларды қабылдау мен сезіну кезіндегі эмоционалды жағдайын талдау міндеттері қойылады. Зерттеу нәтижелерін когнитивті лингвистика мен психологияны біріктіретін теориялық зерттеулерге қосуға болады. Психолингвистика саласындағы тұжырымдар қолданбалы лингвистика мен психологиялық зерттеулерге әдістемелік әсер бере алады.

Түйін сөздер: телевизиялық дискурс, эмпатия, мультимодальдық, психолингвистика, таным, эмоция.

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Эмпатия в теледискурсе

Аннотация. В современной лингвистике растет число прагматико-ориентированных исследований. В частности, обращает на себя внимание использование термина «эмпатия», который время от времени применяется в контексте прагматики. Хорошо известно, что термин «эмпатия» относится к области психологии. В настоящее время его использование в психолингвистике охватывает сферу когнитивной лингвистики. Эмпатия – это способность проявлять сострадание и понимание, погружаясь в когнитивный мир другого человека. Эмпатия часто наблюдается в продуктах теледискурса и стала предметом исследований в этой области. С этой точки зрения можно подчеркнуть необходимость и актуальность развития психолингвистики и фундаментальных когнитивных исследований. В статье рассматривается проявление эмпатии в теледискурсе и ее применение в связи с когнитивной естественной сущностью языка. Цель исследования – привлечь внимание к особым эмоциональным состояниям индивидов и выражению «языка чувств» в такие моменты. Для достижения эффективных целей в исследовании ставятся задачи проанализировать эмпатию в телевизионных новостях и эмоциональное состояние реципиентов во время их восприятия и прочувствования телевизионных программ, используя лингвистические (вербальные) и нелингвистические (невербальные выражения) элементы. Результаты исследования могут быть включены в теоретические исследования, объединяющие когнитивную лингвистику и психологию. Результаты исследований в области психолингвистики могут оказать методологическое влияние на прикладную лингвистику и психологические исследования.

Ключевые слова: телевизионный дискурс, эмпатия, мультимодальность, психолингвистика, когниция, эмоция.

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