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LINGUISTIC APPROACHES TO STUDYING AGGUISTION

Abstract: The purpose of this article is to analyze multilateral essence of aggression via linguistic perspectives. Discourse analysis, pragmatics , and corpus linguistics are being the main approaches of linguistics shall provide thorough comprehension of how aggression is expressed, perceived, and interpreted in language. By investigating linguistic features, such as speech acts, politeness strategies , and lexical choices , this study will supply valuable data how aggression is manifested in communication. In addition, the deeper understanding of aggression nature will be presented through relevant literature and analysis of theoretical data.

Key words: Aggression, linguistics, discourse analysis, pragmatics, corpus linguistics, speech acts, politeness strategies, lexical choices.

The study of aggression has always been a hot topic for discussion in various spheres , including psychology, society , biology and genetics. Accordingly, having a multilateral behavior, aggression was observed differently from evolutionary, neurobiological, and social-cultural viewpoints. While these studies show inestimable results, still aggression needs to be analyzed from linguistic perspective to comprehend its impact on communication. Aggression in its essence is spoken or physical behavior that is threatening or involves harm to someone or something[1] , and can manifest through physical violence, verbal or relational aggression. Psychologically, biologically, and socially aggression has been investigated, while linguistically verbal aggression and the use of aggressive language, remain relatively unexplored. Currently, aggression is manifested in our lives via language , which is the most powerful tool for expressing aggressive behavior. Verbal aggression has patterns of insults, threats , or hostile comments and too common in our daily communication. Even media, politics, and online communication is overwhelmed with aggressive features , which points more to the vitality of understanding the linguistic aspects of aggression.

Linguistic approaches offer unique insights into the manifestation and expression of aggression. Three key linguistic frameworks that are particularly relevant to the study of aggression include discourse analysis, pragmatics, and corpus linguistics. These approaches will allow to analyze the linguistic features, social functions, and psychological effects of aggressive communication. By examining the role of language in aggression, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of aggressive behavior and develop effective strategies for addressing it.

Discourse Analysis of Aggressive Language.

According to (Kamalu & Osisanwo,2015), being a broad field of study, discourse analysis (DA) has interrelation with other spheres, including linguistics, sociology, philosophy and psychology ,

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[1] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/aggression Retrieved on April 21,2024

as discourse analysis obtained some theories and methods of analysis from those disciplines. In addition , discourse analysis correlates with education , communication and cultural studies.

To the question what is discourse analysis, we shall to address to the work of Stephanie Taylor entitled What is Discourse Analysis ? who says that discourse analysis usually refers to a research approach in which language material, such as talk or written texts, and sometimes other material altogether, is examined as evidence of phenomena beyond the individual person (Taylor, 2013) . It means how language is used to construct meaning, negotiate social relations, and achieve communicative goals. It goes beyond analyzing individual words or sentences , but focuses on larger units , such as interviews, texts , or interactions. In the study of aggression, discourse analysis involves examining the use of language in aggressive communication, including the strategies, patterns, and effects of aggressive discourse.

Discourse analysis of aggression explores how aggressive language is structured and used in communication, as well as how it is interpreted by individuals through analyzing lexical choice , syntax , and discourse strategies. Contextually, individuals, their relationship and the setting are examined thoroughly to identify communicative goals of aggression and how language is used to assert power, express dominance, intimidate others, or achieve other social or psychological objectives. Discourse analysis involves analyzing the strategies used to express aggression, such as direct verbal attacks, insults, threats, or hostile comments.

Following are the examples of aggression manifestation :

Insults and verbal attacks:

Example : " You are the ugliest child I have ever seen "

Analysis : This word-for-word comment was taken from the movie Anne with an E when Mrs. Hammond insults young intelligent girl namely Anne for her appearance , which in fact, does not define her personality.

Threats :

Example: " I am going to make you regret the day you were born "

Analysis : Here, direct attack makes the recipient to feel fear and misery.

Sarcasm :

Example: " Oh , that's the great idea. Let's all just stand around and do nothing"

Analysis: sarcastic comments can be a tricky form of communication, as it is difficult to determine whether the speaker is truthful or sarcastic.

This type of analysis can be helpful for a deeper understanding of aggressive behavior and its impact on individuals and society.

Pragmatic Analysis of Aggressive Communication

Pragmatics is a hastily growing field in contemporary linguistics. In recent years, it has not only become a gallop of intents interest in linguistics and the philosophy of language, it has also attracted a considerable amount of attention from anthropologists, artificial intelligence workers, cognitive scientist, physiologist, and semioticians. Pragmatics was insinuated by philosophers like Charles Morris, Rudolf Carnap and Charles Peirce in 1930's. Morris, was influenced by Pierce, put a threefold of categories like syntax, semantics and pragmatics under the umbrella of semiotics—a general science of sign. (Dr. Rita Erlin,2019) .

Several linguists including Levinson(983), Mey(1993), Yule(1996), Tomas(1995), Cutting(2002), Huang (2007) studied the essence of pragmatics.

Meanwhile, Yule (1996 : 3-4) presents four meaningful and exact definitions for pragmatics , which are :

1. Pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning. This has much with the hidden meaning that utterances carry rather than what they mean by themselves.

2.   Pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning. The case with the second point is the interpretation of utterances in context. Where, when and under what circumstances are taken into account while analyzing words.

3.   Pragmatics is the study of how more gets communicated than is said. This approach investigates what is unsaid is recognized as a part of communication.

4.   Pragmatics is the study of the expression of relative distance. This perspective examines the relation of closeness, whether it is physical, social, or conceptual, implies shared experience.

Overall, the pragmatics goes beyond the literal meaning of words and sentences to consider how language is used to achieve specific purposes and to interpret the intended meaning of utterances. If we correlate pragmatics with aggression , we shall address to speech acts , which is the way of expressing acts via words. Aggressive communication involves various speech acts aimed at expressing hostility, asserting power, or causing harm. Common speech acts used in aggressive communication include:

Directives: Commands or requests aimed at influencing the behavior of the listener. Example: "You're fired!" . This example illustrates the power of the boss who initiates the end of the employment.

Insults: Expressions intended to offend or belittle the recipient. Example: "You're fat". This instance offends the person breaking their personal boundaries.

Threats: Expressions of intent to harm or intimidate the recipient. Example: "If you don't do what I say, there will be consequences." Direct threat to make others feel fear and miserable , or dominate over someone.

Politeness strategies based on the Brown & Levinson's (1987) politeness theory refer to linguistic and non-linguistic techniques used to mitigate the potential negative effects of speech acts and maintain social harmony. However, in aggressive communication, politeness strategies are often absent or used in a negative way. Culpeper (1996) introduced the theory of impoliteness which is based on Brown &

Levinson's (1987) politeness theory; he argued that understanding impoliteness is impossible without recognizing politeness (Culpeper, 1996, p. 356).

Culpeper (1996, p. 356) identified some impoliteness strategies. Here are the relevant ones to this work:

1. Bald-on-record impoliteness: This strategy is characterized with direct and explicit aggressive behavior and the employment of taboo expressions. It can be expressed verbally, in writing, or through other forms of communication, such as gestures or facial expressions.

2. Positive impoliteness: it is the way of expressing aggressive behavior in a playful sarcastic and humorous way. Positive impoliteness can be seen in a daily life , including everyday conversation, workplace interactions , and in relationships.

3. Negative impoliteness: it is a type of impoliteness that is expressed in a way that is intended to be hurtful, disrespectful, or insulting. It is often characterized by the use of sarcasm, insults, or other forms of verbal aggression.

4. Withhold politeness: is a type of impoliteness that is expressed in a way that is intended to be hurtful, disrespectful, or insulting. It is often characterized by the use of sarcasm, insults, or other forms of verbal aggression.(Culpeper, 1996, p.356- 358).

Corpus Linguistics and Aggressive Lexical Choices

Corpus linguistics is a branch of linguistics that involves the collection and analysis of large collections of written or spoken texts (corpora) to identify patterns and trends in language use. Corpus linguistics allows researchers to examine language use in real-life contexts, providing insights into the frequency, distribution, and variation of linguistic features.

In the study of aggression, corpus linguistics offers valuable tools and methods for analyzing aggressive language use. Researchers use corpus-based approaches to examine how aggressive communication is expressed, the linguistic features of aggressive language, and the social and psychological functions of aggressive discourse. In corpus-based studies of aggression, researchers analyze lexical choices to identify patterns and trends in aggressive language use. Aggressive lexical choices include words and phrases that express hostility, anger, or confrontation. Examples of aggressive lexical choices include:

Insults: Words or phrases used to offend or belittle others. Examples include derogatory terms, swear words, and pejorative language.

Threats: Expressions of intent to harm or intimidate others. Examples include explicit threats of violence, harm, or punishment.

Hostile language: Words or phrases used to express anger, frustration, or hostility. Examples include aggressive adjectives, adverbs, and verbs.

 Researchers collect a corpus of online comments from social media platforms and discussion forums. They use software tools to analyze the corpus and identify aggressive lexical choices. The analysis reveals that certain words and phrases, such as swear words, insults, and threats, are more frequent in aggressive communication compared to non-aggressive communication.

For example, the analysis might show that swear words such as "f***," "s***," and "damn". "hell" are commonly used in aggressive online comments. Similarly, insults such as "idiot," "moron," and "stupid" are frequently used to belittle others. Threats such as "I'll kill you" or "I'll make you pay" are also identified as common in aggressive communication.

By analyzing aggressive lexical choices in corpora, researchers can identify patterns and trends in aggressive language use, as well as the social and psychological factors that influence aggressive communication. This provides valuable insights into the nature of aggression, its underlying mechanisms, and its impact on individuals and society.

In conclusion, the linguistic analysis of aggression offers valuable insights into the nature, patterns, and effects of aggressive communication. By adopting linguistic approaches such as discourse analysis, pragmatics, and corpus linguistics, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the linguistic features, social functions, and psychological effects of aggressive language use.

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