

Language Variation and Acceptability

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Abstract: The term linguistic variation (or simply variation) refers to regional, social, or contextual differences in the ways that a particular language is used. Variation between languages, dialects, and speakers is known as interspeaker variation. Acceptability is a concept used in linguistics to denote the intuitive judgments by users of a language on how acceptable a linguistic utterance is. The linguistic utterance can be a word, a sentence, a fragment of speech in a certain dialect, or any other piece of language.

Keywords: language, variation, acceptability, phonetic, lexical and grammatical, expression.

Language is a system of phonetic, lexical and grammatical means, which is an instrument for expressing thoughts, feelings, and expressions of will and serves as the most important means of human communication. The main function of language is communicative — language serves to exchange thoughts and coordinate people's joint activities. Acceptability characterizes the "fit" of an expression into the context of discourse and does not coincide with grammar. Appropriateness is more often attributed to larger units - texts and discourses. Anticipating the inappropriateness of a text or discourse in a specific communicative situation is the reason for adaptation. Language variants are mostly a consequence of the European (and not only) colonization of continents and overseas, isolated regions by immigrants from the metropolis. In the most typical cases (North and South America), the colonization of regions from the metropolis took place during a certain period of time (usually the XVI-XIX centuries), due to which the spread of the language in the new region has its own characteristics. It has a clear "imported" character, as a rule, it is based on the speech of the capital since the beginning of colonization or the dialects of those regions of the metropolis from where the largest number of migrants arrived. In the absence of telecommunications during this period, the weakening of the influx of migrants from the metropolis, wars of independence, foreign language influences, etc., a significant number of differences accumulate between the language of colonies and metropolises, which, however, due to the resumption of contacts in the XX—XXI centuries, do not reach such differences as to become different languages. Language variants should not be confused with dialects, since the latter, as a rule, exist within both the language of the metropolis and language variants and, moreover, are expressed in most cases only in the vernacular, do not have official consolidation (although there are exceptions, for example, semi-literary dialects of Italian, which, however, can be considered as separate languages, as well as German, which also has language variants).

The Latin prototypes of the terms acceptability, appropriateness, adaptation and accommodation contain the prefix *ad-* or its positional variants *ac-* and *ap-*: the last consonant of the prefix is assimilated to the initial consonant of the subsequent base. In modern English terminology borrowed from Romance languages, we have, respectively: acceptability, appropriateness, adaptation and accommodation. This prefix has the spatial semantics of proximity ("adessivity") or approximations ("allativity"). As has been pointed out many times, the internal form of many such terms makes itself felt when used in scientific language: the professional skill of scientists begins with knowledge of the original literal meaning of the terms, however, without stopping

there. This shows the consideration of how these terms are used in modern linguistic literature. Text adaptation is a kind of accommodation of culture and to culture in the constantly changing conditions of human life. A prerequisite for adaptation is the awareness of the actual or perceived incomplete acceptability of parts of the text and/or the incomplete appropriateness of the entire text within the circumstances in which the text should be interpreted. When interpreting the text, i.e. when identifying a discourse that "voices" a sequence of linguistic signs and gives meaning to this sequence, they are closely intertwined with knowledge about the world – "non-native" subjects of traditional linguistics adopted by cognitive linguists: there is no folk knowledge for cognitive linguistics. On the relationship of these types of knowledge and their evolution within the framework of interpretation. We will try to understand what is meant by the terms acceptability and relevance in the extensive linguistic literature, and then proceed to characterize the adaptation of the text in the cognitive aspect. In the specialized literature, acceptability is usually attributed to elementary statements and sentences, less often to texts and speech behavior in general. For example, when acceptable communicative behavior is not reduced to the use of a language system, but is associated with the interaction of syntax, logic and pragmatics when including a sentence in context. In other words, "acceptability" characterizes the "fit" of an expression into the context. The focus of attention in this assessment is usually a part of some large education, and not the very thing education. Much less often, by transference, they also talk about an acceptable context for a given sentence, allowing or not allowing presuppositions contained in the sentence. The acceptability of an elementary communicative unit is evaluated not against the background of a grammatical description, but in discourse in that "life of the text" in which rationality, coordination of communicants' actions and their interpretability play a role, and where situational motivation and planning of actions are evaluated against the background of the acceptability of individual steps in the implementation of a discourse strategy. The intention guessed by the recipient behind the communicative actions of the author of the text limits the freedom of interpretation within the framework of the recipient's expectations. Therefore, acceptability is not always favourably established by interpreters, who may also disagree. As a pre-theoretical or even extra-theoretical assessment of the form and content of a statement, acceptability is contrasted with "iron" or "unconditional" correctness of form, compliance with formal norms and standards - well-formedness, or, starting from the first works of the generative paradigm, grammaticality of "grammaticality".

Generally speaking, a grammatical sentence is, by definition, if it is "generated" (described, set) by a given grammar. Grammar is man-made, it is based on the testimony of native speakers about which sentences are acceptable and which are not acceptable. Accordingly, a grammar that claims to be objective is adequate to the extent that it reflects the subjective indications of acceptability for the sentences it describes. Some sentences like a not unhappy person and a not inordinate amount of money are ungrammatical (not allowed by standard grammar), but acceptable. The famous Driving up to this station and looking out the window at nature, my hat flew off (A.P. Chekhov. The Plaintive book), used as a negative example in the struggle for universal grammar in the Russian school, does not protect us from an evaluative failure when meeting with sentences like *Looking at nature, I want to cry*.

This indicates a "high probability" of acceptability despite being ungrammatical. Sentences like a non-sad person are neither grammatical nor acceptable. The empirical establishment of unacceptability, arranged in such a way as not to alarm the subjects, eventually leads to judgments such as: "The proposal is irreparably bad. I wouldn't use it" and " You can say that, but we don't say that."

The logical inconsistency of the proposal is considered a necessary, though not sufficient condition for its acceptability. However, the proposal with the lame logic of Colorless green ideas sleep furiously, invented by N. Chomsky, is acceptable, since it can be interpreted by analogy with a low-key proposal like: Honest black men sleep quietly. Then the violation of everyday logic is forgiven, in which ideas are presented both colorless and green. The erroneous use of collocations (many of which, despite the obvious inaccuracy, are explicable by , as a result of "social conventions" or "material motivation") can also be saved if the proposal is placed in a

broader – say, ironic - context. For example, the phrase heard at the Russian airport: "Flight Moscow – Paris is canceled. We apologize for the inconvenience provided to you" (when we mean not the conditions provided, but the inconvenience caused), indeed, it will soften bitter feelings and brighten up the waiting time for the next flight. Indignation will be replaced by a sardonic smile with an acetylene sheen. The dubiousness of acceptability in life is mitigated by introducing "hedges" or elements that lower the degree of categoricity (understatements), such as Russians, like, like, in some way. In contrast to acceptability, the assessment of appropriateness is more often attributed to larger units – texts and discourses; and to individual sentences and speech acts – only by transfer as parts of larger speech segments. Relevance in the broadest sense of the word ("communicative correctness", or "communicative acceptability" is a case when a person's behavior meets the expectations of the audience, preserves the general context of this interaction, and is considered against the background of ethical and aesthetic agreements of a given culture. The speech acts performed can then be considered appropriate ("happy" or "successful" circumstances of communication correspond to the expectations of the author of the speech himself, contributing to mutual understanding of people, and – again, by transfer - are also called appropriate circumstances of communication. But thanks to whom are speech actions appropriate? Is it the merit of the "speaker" who diligently fits his statements into the general situation of communication in such a way as to achieve social acceptability? Or a sensitive interpreter harmoniously links the angular and incoherent speeches of a crazy speaker in his inner world, cf.: "Ah, it's not difficult to deceive me!... I am glad to be deceived myself!" (A.S. Pushkin)? In the latter case, the adequacy of interpretation is sacrificed to mental balance, peace between interlocutors, sometimes reducing the aggressiveness of the message . Public opinion gently condemns such cases ("Spit in His eyes – it's all God's dew"), but dutifully legalizes the resulting discourse: a bad world is still better than a good quarrel, even over a trifling interpretation. K. Fossler identified 4 reasons for such inadequacy: the speaker's negligence in choosing expressions (mistakes that he is ready to make if necessary correct), lack of a speech plan (without rudder and without sails), exaggerated rigidity of the speaker and insufficient stock of expressive means – the poverty of the language as a system as a whole or the author's insufficient experience in using the riches language. So, the reason for adaptation is the foresight of the inappropriateness of a text or discourse in its original form in a specific communicative situation. The need to adapt speech to (or for) the target audience is evidenced by cases of not only inadequate content (for example, we prefer not to talk about some problems with children for the time being), but also the "register" – the stylistic (i.e. consciously or unconsciously chosen) "key" to the construction and understanding of speech. Here is an example of an unadapted speech: "A young man, passing by the garden, saw a five-year-old girl at the gate. She stood and cried. He bent over her affectionately and, to my amazement, said, "What are you crying about?" *His feelings were the most tender, but there were no human words to express tenderness* " [Chukovsky 1961]. This type of register is called "stationery". Small children do not remain in debt, delighting us with old-fashioned twisted phrases beyond their age, such as: "I have good reason to believe that our nanny initiated an affair with the janitor" (the Germans call such children *altkluge Kinder* "senile smart kids"). Lexically and grammatically well-versed children they still do not realize that adults should be spared and not be frightened by expressions with random semantic connections. And stationery turns out to be a manifestation of communicative infantilism. Of course, the social environment of the source text may differ dramatically from the context which and in which adaptation takes place. After all, the author's knowledge and ideology may differ from the knowledge and ideology of the target audience. Text editing and translation can be based on the history of earlier versions of the same text and even on the history of translations into other languages. Extensive experience in this field has proven the usefulness of rules to avoid incongruence: one should strive not to delete or insert indicators of affirmation, exclusion, denial, focus and agents, avoid reversion of transitional constructions, do not "round up" the indications of time and place, do not add deixis. The transmission of the tonality of the text (maintaining a neutral presentation, tragedy, humor, irony, polemic, etc.) is "aerobatics" when adapting the text, especially when translating. No wonder U. Eco believed that there is "fidelity to the original" (faithfulness, and if desired,

loyalty, devotion, allegiance, piety in relation to the text), but there is no accuracy (exactitude) of the translation. Text adaptation techniques include also the addition and elimination of figures of speech. Feeling that the text should not be taken literally, the audience tries to calculate the Grice implicatures [Bergmann 1982: 239], and at the same time assesses the degree of relevance of these figures. The abuse of metaphors causes a feeling of "absurdity instead of music." Acceptability characterizes the "fit" of an expression into the context. The focus of this assessment is on a part of a large education, not the education itself. Much less often, according to the transfer, they also talk about the "acceptable context" for this proposal. In both cases, the assessment takes place not against the background of a grammatical description, but "in the life" of the text, in discourse. They are more often referred to larger units – texts and discourses; to individual sentences and speech acts – only by transfer as parts of larger speech segments. The inappropriateness of the text is the recognition of its lack of adaptation to specific communicative conditions. Anticipating the inappropriate presentation of a text or discourse in its original, unadapted form in a specific communicative situation is a reason for adaptation. Adaptation is understood as both the process and the result of this process. Text adaptability is the degree of "pragmatic acceptability" that lies beyond the purely linguistic (in the sense of the langue – language-system) sphere of text interpretation.

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