FROM PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR TO PRAGMATIC EMPATHY IN DISCOURSE: INSIGHTS INTO LINGUISTIC CONSCIOUSNESS

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Having linguistic roots in ancient Greek, all the same the concept of empathy is of recent intellectual heritage. It has been controversial since entering the language of psychology and psychiatry. T. Lipps introduced the term "Einfühlung", writing about aesthetic appreciation and perception [1]. "Einfühlung" meant "feeling oneself into" in German, and was translated as "empathy" by E. Titchener [2]. Lipps believed that, possessing "practical empathy", people examined and contemplated an object of art or nature, projected themselves into the object, established an identification between the object and oneself, engaged in a process of inner imitation, and in this way understood and appreciated the object much better. Several years later, this definition was extended to include people. Thus, according to Lipps, proceeded by means of projection and imitation, empathy could involve either objects or persons as targets, and consisted largely of heightened understanding of the other through cue-produced shared feelings [3: 80].

After the introduction of Lipps, many scholars from various fields of study showed great interest in the concept of empathy. R. T. Hogan defined it as the ability to take the intellectual or imaginative apprehension of another's condition or state of mind [4]; G. H. Mead's definition determined it as the capacity to take the role of the other and to adopt alternative perspectives visa-vis oneself [5]. It can be noticed, that these definitions added a cognitive component to the earlier affective emphasis in the form of "the ability to understand". Moreover, the notion of "identity merger" evolved into a self-other differentiation in which the empathizer temporarily took the role of the empathizee or put himself/herself in the other's place during empathic process. In other words, the empathizer tries to perceive, sense, share, and conceptualize how the empathizee is experiencing the world [3: 80].

Nowadays empathy is mirrored in the multiplicity of studies in a number of different scientific and non-scientific discourses, but crucial is the idea of acquiring another person's perspective [ibid]. There is increasing evidence that empathy causes pro-social and helping behavior, and lack of empathy is linked to anti-social attitudes [6; 7]. Studies on the functions of mirror-neurons and Theory of Mind reveal the importance of imitation and understanding of other and own intention for development of social cognition [8]. Davis distinguishes between cognitive and emotional empathy, which refers to empathy as attitude or taking the perspective of the other and empathy as emotional response to the emotions of the other, respectively. He also introduces a distinction between two types of emotional empathy: parallel empathy or empathy related to the other's feeling directed to a third person and reactive empathy or empathy to the other's feelings oriented towards it/her/himself [6].

Together with neurosciences, discourse is considered to be a legitimate source of insight into the nature and functions of empathy. In pragmatically oriented linguistics empathy is researched as "the point of view" in an anaphoric utterance by which a participant is bound with the event or state that he/she describes in that sentence, or the participant in the reported event whose perspective is taken by the speaker. Empathy is involved in the semantics of numerous grammatical constructions and applies it to explain sentence structures [9]. It is also identified with interactive behavior through empathic listening [10], realization of assessments in talk [11], paraphrasing and reflection [12], conversation analysis of social empathic interplay [13], and rejection in negotiation [14]. Thus, in linguistics empathy belongs to the domain of pragmatics, and little attention has been given to the linguistic features, which help us recognize its interactive-cognitive dynamics. The present research is done from the perspective of pragmatics, it identifies discursive and linguistic features associated with giving and rejection of empathy, which highlights the relevance of the article.

The scientists rightly argue that discursive actualization of empathy goes through three stages: elicitation, giving and acceptance that can be implemented in sequence or simultaneously [15: 1]. We believe that the foundation of these stages can be (a) identification (in which the empathizer recognizes the need of the empathizee) – projecting self into the other, (b) incorporation (in which the empathizer internalizes the emotional state of the empathizee and makes it his or her own) – introjecting the other into self, (c) reverberation (in which the empathizer then responds to the empathizee's emotional state) – interplaying of own and other experience, and (d) detachment (in which the empathizer retreats from fusion with the empathizee in order to comprehend fully with the empathizee's emotional condition) – withdrawal from subjective involvement and recourse to use of methods of reason [16]. Let us illustrate this with an example of a successful empathic discursive act:

(1) *Langdon watched Vittoria approach. She had obviously been crying, her deep sable eyes filled with emotions Langdon could not place. Still, she moved toward them with fire and command. Her limbs were strong and toned, radiating the healthy luminescence of Mediterranean flesh that had enjoyed long hours in the sun.*

«Vittoria,» Kohler said as she approached. «My deepest condolences. It's a terrible loss for science … for all of us here at CERN.»

Vittoria nodded gratefully. When she spoke, her voice was smooth – a throaty, accented English.

«Do you know who is responsible yet?»

«We're still working on it.»

She turned to Langdon, holding out a slender hand. «My name is Vittoria Vetra. You're from Interpol, I assume?» [17: 63].

Identification and incorporation begin at the stage of empathy elicitation with Vittoria's appearance (*Langdon watched Vittoria approach. She had obviously been crying, her deep sable eyes filled with emotions Langdon could not place*). Elicited empathy is both parallel and reactive. Vittoria's attractive physical appearance contributed to the success of this phase (*Her limbs were strong and toned, radiating the healthy luminescence of Mediterranean flesh that had enjoyed long hours in the*

sun), and it immediately turns to the stage of explicit giving of empathy, based on the reverberation (*«Vittoria,» Kohler said as she approached. «My deepest condolences. It's a terrible loss for science ... for all of us here at CERN»*). Explicitness is realized linguistically (*deepest condolences, terrible loss*) and non-verbally (three dots, indicating strong emotions).

Acceptance of empathy is actualized on a nonverbal level (*Vittoria nodded gratefully*). Right after the acceptance stage begins the phase of detachment *(«Do you know who is responsible yet?» «We're still working on it»*), which ends with an unexpected change of conversation topic *(My name is Vittoria Vetra. You're from Interpol, I assume?*). It should be noted that in this empathic discursive act initially emotionality prevails, which gradually turns into cognition. Changing the topic of conversation at the end and interlocutors' repeated role change during communication predicate the rituality of empathy process.

Perlocutionary effect of empathic discursive act is difficult to provide, it can only be predicted. Perlocution depends on many factors: the characteristics of cognitive and psychological states of empathizer and empathizee, preconditions, conditions of propositional meaning, communication sincerity, well chosen means of empathy provoking or expression etc. Perlocutionary effect can be manifested as follows: a) acceptance of empathy on the part of empathizee (2); b) rejection of empathy on the part of empathizee (3); c) the presence of empathy on the part of empathizer (4); d) absence of empathy on the part of empathizer (5). The rejection or absence of empathy may take the form of anger or irritation, if such is the case, empathic discursive act is perceived as interference in the personal area:

(2) *Then he said, seriously, in his own voice: «I came out to the Lock because I was worried he might hurt you.» «Were you?» was all that Marie said but he was relieved that there was no laughter in her voice. She sounded surprised and grateful. Gazzer had been afraid that she would say something like: «Well, you needn't have bothered!» or «You and whose army!» She didn't, though* [18].

(3) *I'm sort of kneeling there, so I put my hand on Marie's back to make her feel better, but she rolls away from me.*

«Don't touch me» [ibid].

(4) *«Ma, what's going on? The really frightening thing is not understanding.»*

Her eyes flickered. Then she reached up a hand and stroked his hair gently. «I know it's hard,» she murmured. «But it will be all right, I'm sure it will. And you will understand. In the end» [ibid].

(5) *«He's not such a bad chap you know» I yawned. «I've seen worse.»*

«He's got no soul,» Elinor protested [ibid].

We must not forget that the way of empathy verbalization is determined by personality, and inadequate, imprecise choice of remarks during the discursive act may cause psychological rejection of empathy. Its absence is an integral part of «difficult communication», which is defined as an uncomfortable, inefficient, adverse communicative process.

Difficult communication can be caused by many factors of lingual and extralingual type. In particular, these include the nature of interpersonal relations of empathizer and empathizee. Difficulties caused by this factor are manifested in the

form of explicitly expressed conflict, disagreements, and communication reluctance. In this case we can observe a rejection of emotional empathy:

(6) *«A museum piece! A poor, pathetic old man.» Father Poole drew back as Myles stood before him, trembling, his glaring face twitching.*

«How dare you!» he grated. «How dare you use your condescending ways on me! So I'm an object of pity, am I? Why you snuff-sniffing, yellow-faced, craw-thumping pious old hypocrite! What do you know!»

Father Poole blinked in dismay. I've antagonised him, he thought. He had allowed himself to be carried away [ibid].

From this example it is obviously seen that the communicators have strained relations that determine explicit, aggressive attitude of empathizee *(How dare you! How dare you use your condescending ways on me! So I'm an object of pity, am I?)*, which is also shown in his rough tactless expression *(Why you snuff-sniffing, yellow-faced, craw-thumping pious old hypocrite! What do you know!)*. The analyzed discursive act has no prospects of further development, as introactive relationship empathy of father Poole caused unpredictable perlocutionary effect on the part of Myles. Obviously, this way of empathy verbalization *(A museum piece! A poor, pathetic old man)* proved inadequate and led to its rejection.

Moreover, this discursive act depends on the individual psychological traits of empathizer and empathize, on their emotional disposition, type of emotional experiences, temperaments, accompanied by negative emotions, specific interpersonal stress, discomfort, and a sense of dissatisfaction. Interlocutors lack empathic competence, the ability to emotionally feel the partner, to consider the world of his feelings, enter his inner world – traits that are essential for the successful implementation of empathy. In the process of empathy rejection there are psychological barriers that neutralize and block empathic communication.

If interlocutors do not have strained relations, empathizee can assume an implicitly-strategic attitude. In this case we observe the rejection of cognitive empathy:

(7) *Langdon sat up in his empty bed and tried to clear his mind. «This ... is Robert Langdon.» He squinted at his digital clock. It was 5:18 A.M.*

«I must see you immediately.»

«Who is this?»

«My name is Maximilian Kohler. I'm a discrete particle physicist.»

«A what?» Langdon could barely focus. «Are you sure you've got the right Langdon?»

«You're a professor of religious iconology at Harvard University. You've written three books on symbology and —»

«Do you know what time it is?»

«I apologize. I have something you need to see. I can't discuss it on the phone.»

...

«How did you get my number?» Langdon tried to be polite, despite the hour.

«On the Worldwide Web. The site for your book.»

Langdon frowned. He was damn sure his book's site did not include his home phone number. The man was obviously lying.

«I need to see you," the caller insisted. "I'll pay you well.»
Now Langdon was getting mad. «I'm sorry, but I really—»
«If you leave immediately, you can be here by—»
«I'm not going anywhere! It's five o'clock in the morning!» Langdon hung up and collapsed back in bed [17: 3-5].

This discursive act begins with the stage of empathy elicitation (*I must see you immediately.*), which is rejected by empathizer's using questions and check backs (*«Who is this?», «A what?», «Are you sure you've got the right Langdon?»*), and also interjection (*«You're a professor of religious iconology at Harvard University. You've written three books on symbology and—» «Do you know what time it is?»*). The next utterance foregrounds both giving and elicitation of empathy (*I apologize. I have something you need to see. I can't discuss it on the phone.*), i.e., here Maximilian Kohler is both an empathizer and an empathizee. However, empathy is again rejected by Robert Langdon's using polite questions, demonstrating the lack of trust (*How did you get my number?*), nonverbally reinforced by a negative facial expression (*Langdon frowned*). Then interlocutors again interrupt each other, not wanting to understand, feel and enter the inner world of the communicator. The discursive act of empathy rejection is completed with the change of an implicitly-strategic attitude by an explicitly-aggressive one (*I'm not going anywhere! It's five o'clock in the morning!*).

Thus, empathy functions as a tool of pro-social behavior in the discursive world. Its elicitation, giving and acceptance can be implemented in sequence or simultaneously, and the foundation of these stages can be identification, incorporation, reverberation, and detachment (which predicate the rituality of empathy process). Perlocutionary effect of empathic discursive act can be either acceptance or rejection. The rejection of empathy is an integral part of «difficult communication», which is defined as an uncomfortable, inefficient, adverse communicative process. It can be caused by the nature of interpersonal relations of empathizer and empathizee (emotional disposition, type of emotional experiences, temperaments etc.) and is manifested in the form of explicitly expressed conflict, disagreements, and communication reluctance. If interlocutors do not have strained relations, during the rejection of cognitive empathy they can assume an implicitly-strategic attitude, which can turn into explicitly-aggressive one. The prospect of future research is the in-depth study of lexis, which is used while eliciting, giving, accepting, and rejecting of empathy.

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