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## ON POLIFUNCTIONAL NATURE OF HEDGES IN DISCOURSE

**Summary.** The objective of the present paper is twofold: (1) to describe functional semantics of the hedge expressed by the pseudo-performative clause with the personal pronoun “I + verb (mental)” in the ST within the framework of Functional Semantics and Discourse-Analysis and, second, to specify its transformation and transposition into the TT in the framework of contrastive semantics. The analysis of the corpus of 114 text fragments retrieved from the novel “The Firm” by John Grisham and the *think* verb distribution, i.e. its lexical-grammatical and lexical-semantic combinability gives us a possibility to draw its definition “to have as an intention” which points to the transposition of the *I think* – performative matrix into the *I think* –informative matrix and therein the speaker’s information (idea, point of view) turns the matrix into the *I think*- deliberation or approximation. Thus the lexical meaning of the verb *think* in the *I think* speech act undergoes a functional-semantic shift.

**Key words:** hedge, functional semantics, discourse, translation, polisemantic, polifunctional.

**Introduction.** A hedge is a marker of uncertainty in language and draws scholars’ attention to the information that encoded in it: G. Lakoff, 1972; J.G. Zuck, 1986; / P.G. Meyer, 1997; R. Rabadan, 2005; M.R. Ataei, L.Sadr, 2006; Gomez Fortanet, 2010; Gunther Kaltenboeck, 2010; Isabel Verdager, 2010; F. Salager-Meyer, 2012; O. Yagız, 2014; M. Samaie et al., 2014; D. Sipka, 2015; Ronza Abu Rumman, 2015 and others). The purpose of this paper is to discuss hedging within the framework of functional semantics and discourse-analysis. The origins of the term “hedge” go back to 1970s and to G. Lakoff who first introduced the term in 1977 to denote independent lexical items with the capacity to make things ‘fuzzier’ [15, p. 195]. Primarily, hedging referred only to expressions such as *kind of*, *sort of* or *rather* which could be used to, for example, modify a degree of membership [15, p. 195–6]. As G. Clemen points out, G. Lakoff was mainly concerned with the logical relationships of words and the semantic aspect of hedges and did not consider context to be important for hedges to reveal their meaning but saw hedges as independent lexical items with the capacity to make things “fuzzier” [4, p. 236–238]. A number of linguists developing G. Lakoff’s ideas have generally adopted a broader view on hedging in the pragmatic semantic framework [Mauranen, 2004; R. Rabadan, 2005; M.R. Ataei, L. Sadr, 2006; G. Fortanet, 2010; F. Salager-Meyer, 2012; O. Yagız, 2014; M. Samaie et al., 2014; D. Sipka, 2015 and others].

Hedging is used by speakers to convey certainty or doubt towards a statement and show the degree of their confidence. By using hedges, speakers allow their addressees to evaluate the truth value of the assertion. This study examines the type and frequency of hedges expressed by the “pseudo-performative” matrix “*I think*” and its functional semantic structure in the ST and the TT [20, p. 357]. A corpus of 114 text fragments was selected from the novel by John Grisham “The Firm” and its Russian translation by Yuriy G. Kiriak.

The objective of this study is twofold, first, to see how “pseudo-performative” sentences as hedges functioning in the Source Text and, second, to define their transformation in the Target Text.

**State of the art.** G. Lakoff [15, p. 213] paved the way to the introduction of hedges into pragmatics by stating that obviously hedges interact with felicity conditions for utterances and rules of conversation and mentioning the possibility that hedges may act on as performatives. B. Fraser developed the concept of “hedged performative”, i.e., that performatives may be hedged by modal verbs, as in English “I must advise you that...” [9, p. 187–190]. Hedging is a communicative strategy which enables speakers to, for example, soften the force of their utterances [22, p. 188], in order to make them more acceptable to the interlocutor. Over the years, hedging has been studied from various viewpoints which mostly emphasize the pragmatic aspects of hedging in interpersonal communication, V. Namsaraev suggests a functional classification of hedges which reflects various language levels – a word, a sentence, a communicative marker, an illocutionary device, a protection unit, etc. [21, p. 68–69]. Our research is based on the assumption that the “pseudo-performative” matrix “*I think*” is a functional semantic unit which meaning is polisemantic with the hedging component is primary.

The limited numbers of studies undertaken in the area of contrastive studies have shown that there are some variations in the use of hedges across languages [10, p. 109–110]. Hedging is most commonly expressed by lexical verbs (e.g. appear, believe), epistemic adverbs (e.g. possibly, apparently), epistemic adjectives (e.g. likely, possible), and modal verbs (e.g. may, should). The surface forms of hedges can range from single lexical items to 6 syntactic structures. Hedges also may appear alone or in clusters and get their meaning from context and therefore it is not possible to make any “lists of hedges” [4, p. 243; 22, p. 190]. There are two types of hedges: those that affect the truth-conditions of propositions – approximators, and shields, which do not affect the truth-conditions but reflect the degree of the speaker’s commitment to the truth-value of the whole proposition, cf.: Hübler’s comprehensive analysis of understatements and hedges both used for expressing ‘indetermination’ [1]. In this study, the analysis is based on the comparison between the “pseudo-performative” sentences as hedge in the ST and its transform in the TT. Hedges are also studied within discourse analysis which enables the investigation of the context as well.

**Investigation.** Hedging has come to designate a manifestation of language by means of which speakers take precautionary measures to protect themselves from the negative effect of their sayings or to protect themselves or their interlocutors from any harm to the concept of face caused by their utterances.. Explicit performative utterances are those whose illocutionary force is made explicit by the verbs appearing in them. The first-person pronoun and present tense verb form represent a performative matrix, while others cannot.

One way of conveying interpersonal messages in spoken interaction is hedging, a communicative strategy which enables speak-

ers to, for example, soften the force of their utterances [22, p. 188]. Lexical verbs with modal meanings, mainly the so-called speech act verbs used to perform acts like evaluating, assuming or doubting rather than merely describing: the epistemic *seem* and *appear*, also *believe*, *assume*, *suggest*, *estimate*, *tend*, *think*, *argue*, *indicate*, *propose*, *speculate*, *suppose*, etc. [7, p. 63]. Mental verbs in the performative matrix act somewhat differently than active verbs. Some of the main differences are: (1) most of them are not used in progressive tenses; (2) when they (for instance, see, hear, smell) are used in the progressive, their meanings may be different from when they're used in the simple tenses; (3) while mental verbs can be used with *-used to* to talk about past habits, they cannot be used with *would* to talk about past habits; (4) they are usually used with the present perfect rather than the present perfect progressive to talk about states that started in the past and continue to the present. The definition of the Dominant lexeme "THINK" of the Semantic domain of "Mental verbs" in the English language, for instance, the Cambridge Dictionary reveals its definition: (a) to believe something or have an opinion or idea; (b) to have a low opinion of someone or something (think + not); (c) to use the brain to decide to do something; (d) to use the brain to plan; (e) something, solve a problem, understand a situation, etc.; (f) to think very carefully about something; (g) to automatically say what you are thinking. Cf. Merriam Webster details it: (a) to form or have in the mind; (b) to have as an intention; (c) to have as an opinion; (d) to regard as: *consider*; (e) to reflect on: *ponder*; (f) to determine by reflecting; (g) think what to do next; (h) to call to mind; *remember*; (i) to devise by thinking – usually used with *up*; (j) to have as an expectation: *anticipate*; (k) to center one's thoughts on; (l) to form a mental picture of; (m) to subject to the processes of logical thought; (n) to exercise the powers of judgment, conception, or inference: *reason*; (o) to have in the mind or call to mind a thought; (p) to have the mind engaged in reflection: *meditate*; (q) to consider the suitability; (r) to have a view or opinion; (s) to have concern – usually used with *of*; (t) to consider something likely: *suspect*. They all can constitute the Semantic domain of "Mental verbs" in the English language where they are classified into micro domains according to their definitions: (1) to think or think about carefully and at length: *chew on* (or *over*), *cogitate*, *consider*, *contemplate*, *deliberate*, *entertain*, *excogitate*, *meditate*,

*mull*, *muse*, *ponder*, *reflect*, *revolve*, *ruminare*, *study*, *think out*, *think over*, *think through*, *turn over*, *weigh*; (2) to use the powers of the mind, as in conceiving ideas, drawing inferences, and making judgments (*cerebrate*, *cogitate*, *deliberate*, *ratiocinate*, *reflect*, *speculate*); (3) to view in a certain way: *believe*, *feel*, *hold*, *sense*; (4) to regard in an appraising way: *believe*, *repute*, *suppose*; (5) to have an opinion: *believe*, *consider*, *deem*, *hold*, *opine*. (Informal) *figure*, *judge*; (6) to renew an image or thought in the mind: *bethink*, *mind*, *recall*, *recollect*, *remember*, *reminisce*, *retain*, *revive*; (7) to form mental images of *conceive*, *envisage*, *envision*, *fancy*, *fantasize*, *image*, *imagine*, *picture*, *see*, *vision*, *visualize* (Merriam Webster). When used epistemically as hedging elements these verbs express the speaker's strong belief in the truth of the utterance or, on the contrary, the speaker's unwillingness to vouch for understanding the utterance as more than a personal opinion. The analysis of the corpus of 114 text fragments retrieved from the novel and the *think* verb distribution, i.e. its lexical-grammatical and lexical-semantic combinability, gives us a possibility to draw the definition of *think*: "to have as an intention" which points to the transposition

of the *I think* – performative matrix into the *I think* –informative matrix and therein the speaker's information (idea, point of view) turns the matrix into the *I think* – *uncertainty* or approximation. Thus, the lexical meaning of the verb *think* in the *I think* speech act undergoes the a functional-semantic shifts.

In the process of the discourse analysis we have selected "I think – speech acts and their functional-semantic variants, the I-position can be also filled with *We* inclusive, cf.:

1. I think Milligan's there now, probably scuba diving and calling it business. «Думаю, Миллиган сейчас там, скорее всего, развлекается подводным плаванием и называет это своим бизнесом».

2. "I think I've seen him," Mitch said. «По-моему, я его видел».

3. If you think you can take your million and ride into the sunset, you're a fool.

«Если ты решил, что можешь прихватить с собой свой миллион и раствориться в закате, то ты явно сошел с ума».

4. There was some kind of an explosion on a boat, and we think they drowned. «На их лодке что-то взорвалось, и мы думаем, что они утонули».

5. We suspect that most of the associates know, but it's hard to tell. «Мы считаем, что большинство сотрудников тоже в курсе, но об этом судить труднее».

*Think* is one of the six primitive mental predicates in the Natural Semantic metalanguage theory [10, p. 109–110] and thinking is a basic mental concept [8; 29, p. 105–105]: "All the world's languages would appear to have at least one word referring to general mental activity unavailable to external observation, such as English think" [8, p. 15]. *Think* is the most generally used mental verb with the most general meaning. Verbs which refer to mental processes usually involve a human participant, which is the "Cognizer" and the object of the mental process, the "Phenomenon" or "Topic" to report one's or somebody else's opinion [11]. All these sentences express 'uncertainty', or vagueness, or approximation, or "doubt" The I-speaker is Singular, the We-speaker, despite its plural form is Singular representing a group of speakers. The verbs *believe*, *feel*, *guess*, *hope*, *imagine*, *suppose* *suspect*, *understand*, *wonder* used in the slot of "Think" can form the Semantic domain of "Mental verbs" in John Grisham's discourse, e.g.:

6. I think we'll all live ten years longer. «Думаю, все мы проживем теперь лет на десять больше».

7. You guys catch them occasionally, about one percent of the time, I believe. «Ваши люди ловят их чисто случайно, где-то примерно один процент от общего числа, как мне кажется».

8. I feel like I've known you for years. «У меня такое впечатление, что мы уже давно знакомы».

9. I guess he told you about me. «Видимо, и вам рассказал обо мне».

10. I hope you're right. «Надеюсь, что ты окажешься прав».

11. I don't imagine Western Kentucky is much of an academic school, – Lamar blurted with a stupid grin, and immediately wished he could take it back. Lambert and McKnight frowned and acknowledged the mistake. «Не думается мне, что колледж в Кентукки был из разряда лучших, – неосторожно вырвалось у Ламара вместе с пренебрежительной усмешкой. Он тут же пожалел об этом, но было поздно. Его коллеги неодобрительно шевельнули бровями, давая понять, что заметили промах». Here the speaker's personal opinion expressed by a hedge: *I don't imagine* caused a negative abrupt reaction on the part of the addressee as well as the committee members.

12. And I suppose the lawyer would be severely punished. It might cost a partnership. «Не думаю, что найдутся желающие выяснить это на собственном опыте».

13. I suspect I'm being watched very closely. «Думаю, что замной внимательно следят».

14. Good morning. I was kinda wondering if you folks were still here. «Доброе утро. Я, того, решил посмотреть, не уехали вы еще?»

15. I don't understand, Mitch. Why are they so generous? «Не понимаю, Митч, почему они так щедры?»

The given "I think" pseudo-performative matrix introduces the speaker's vague or uncertain personal opinion [33, p. 597–600; 9, p. 187–188] aimed at providing his/her personal interpretation of some shared information.

In the present paper we intend to investigate the lexical equivalence of the English mental verb 'think' -- the Russian verb 'думать' in the parallel corpora [27, p. 297]. It will help us to further specify the differences in the bilingual dictionaries. In the Russian encyclopedic dictionaries the verb 'думать' is defined as (1) обдумывать что или о чем, мыслить, судить, заключать про себя; полагать, выводить, ожидать; намереваться, хотеть; заботиться, печься; думать с кем, советоваться сообща или замышлять (Даль); (2) полагать, держаться какого-н. мнения; считать виновным в чем-н., подозревать (прост.); иметь намерение (Ожегов); (3) мыслить, обдумывать, предполагать, полагать, надеяться (Ефремова); and (4) «думать», полагать, судить (Фасмер). Among the given constituents we do not find any direct nomination common with the English 'uncertain, approximate, doubt' which could function as true hedging. In the Russian semantic domain «думать» we can distinguish four basic micro domains: (1) полагать, считать, чаять, мнить, мыслить *иметь мнение*; (2) размышлять, мыслить, раздумывать, помышлять; (3) намереваться, собираться, предполагать, располагать, рассчитывать, мыслить; (4). подозревать, кажется. At first sight, English and Russian micro domains closely correlate, however, the constituents consider «полагать», *deliberate* «обдумывать», *intend* «намереваться» can be relative equivalents. Henning Weigand call it 'isomorphism' of the SL and the TL polysemic lexemes [32, p. 1-10]. Although the first meaning of *think* that comes to mind is that of mental activity or cogitation, but English *think* has a broader semantic coverage than the Russian verb «думать» with various components which are not always easy to delimit, since they have fuzzy boundaries. The corpus analysis of the data shows the polysemy of *think*. The range of its components may need to be identified by means of contextual cues or extra-linguistic knowledge. *Think* is a highly polysemous verb, see: English and Russian dictionary entries, its components can be classified into two main classes: (1) expressing cogitation and (2) expressing opinion. Thus, the investigation of the meaning of the verb *think* «думать» has brought us to the dead alley – a registered definition and fixed classifications which unable to pinpoint meaning of the verb *think* «думать» in the context. 53 cases of *think* are registered in the corpus he English and some of the entries are 'inextricable from the Russian cultural context (6 cases of *think* are omitted in the Russian text [32, p. 119–120]. The translator used the Russian mental verbs like *быть уверенным, казаться, сомневаться, бояться, считать, быть похожим, надеяться, знать, предполагать*, etc.

Finding the right Russian equivalents for the English mental verb "think" is a challenging activity. Likewise to get into the author's choice of the verb to express his/her intention is next to im-

possible without its context. From our point of view the parallel text analysis, in our case the Source Text and the Target Text is the way out. Though, the authenticity of the author's intention much depends on the translator's proficiency level of Language and Culture – in the original and translated texts. We have suggested considering the lexical meaning of the verb to revealing its componential structure in ST and the TT [28, p. 59]; then modeling a semantic domain in the both languages to search for equivalents. Equivalence is commonly established that the ST and TT words supposedly refer to the same thing in the real world, i.e. on the basis of their referential or denotative equivalence. The ST and TT words are considered to be equivalent when they cause the same or nearly the same associations in the minds of the native speakers of the two languages (pragmatic equivalents), their connotative meanings are used in the same or nearly the same contexts (text-normative equivalents) [3, p. 96–99; 17, p. 3–5], e.g.:

16. Plus, I think it costs more to entice the top people to Memphis. «Потом, я думаю, заманить профессионала в Мемфис действительно стоит дороже».

17. I don't think my wife would understand either. She's out of town, though. «Не думаю, что и моя жена с готовностью приняла бы эту ситуацию».

18. I still don't believe it. I'm numb, paralyzed. I shudder at the thought of seeing Marty's wife and the kids. I'd rather be lashed with a bullwhip than go over there.

«Мне по-прежнему не верится. Столбняк напал. Становится нехорошо, как подумую о его жене и детях».

19. I guess you want me to believe you boys can protect me for the rest of my life.

«Как я понимаю, вы хотите, чтобы я поверил тому, что вы сможете меня защитить на всю мою оставшуюся жизнь?»

20. I hope you're right. «Надеюсь, что ты окажешься прав».

21. I don't understand. If they were talking serious, why the boy? Why have another set of ears around? «Не понимаю. Если у них серьезный разговор, то зачем им еще парень? Для чего пара лишних ушей».

These examples (16–21) illustrate the traditional lexical equivalence of the English verb *think* → Russian *думать*; English *believe* → Russian *верить*; English *guess* → Russian *понимать*; English *hope* → Russian *надеяться*; English *understand* → *понимать*. Some variations appear either due to the translator's resorting to the semantic domain, or intra- and extra-context, or his/her professional flair, in some complicated cases the translator's professional flair and experience take the upper hand, for instance: *I think / I don't think* → *по-моему*, where one can see the transformation of the clause syntactic structure into the adverb used as introductory or parenthetical word, however, the functional-semantic component of the personal deliberation or uncertainty is retained.

At present in translation theory there is a turn of focus from language system to text or discourse. This shift resulted in narrowing the scope of the term of equivalence to intertextual relation [32, p. 119–120]. There are also several cases of lexical transformation, see: (1) *think* → *предпочитать, бояться, знать, надеяться, считать, казаться, решать, сомневаться, верить, быть похожим*; (2) *believe* → *казаться*; (3) *feel* → *иметь впечатление*; (4) *suspect* → *казаться, думать, считать, быть убежденным*; (5) *wonder* → *решать*. There are cases of morphological transformations when a mental verb is substituted by the modal adverb: *guess* → *верно, видимо, suppose* → *видимо, guess* → *верно, видимо*; or by the modal verb *think* → *должно быть*; or the indicative form is substituted by

the subjunctive one: I think → Я предпочел бы; As for syntactical transformations the subject in the original matrix “I think” → думаю is omitted due to its redundancy—the flexion of the Russian verb refers to the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular present; I think → по-моему; I think → думаю; I think → похоже; I think → боюсь; I think → должно быть. Hedging allows speakers to manipulate both factivity and affect inviting readers to draw inferences about the reasons their use” [29, p. 107], cf.: Coates’ assumption that “epistemic modality is always a hedge” [5, p. 49] Our analysis has identified the epistemic modality feature in the semantics of *I think* with the dominant hedging feature in the English text. V. Namsaraev says that hedges differ from epistemic modality in their close correlation in “pragmatic dimension of language” [21, p. 66–67]. Here is again a philosophical question: “What is primary – modality or hedging?” Our assumption is that it depends upon the focus of research and its end-goal, for our paper a hedging component is primary and modal is the secondary one, though in the long run we must admit the expansion of the functional semantics of hedging units.

“I think” and its synonyms in John Grisham’s discourse are clear-cut hedging devices revealing the speaker’s personal vague opinion which contradicts the present state of affairs shared by others. Our findings prove the fact that the registered mental verbs denote personal view which draws the attention of interlocutors to the matter under discussion; see the illustration (11) as an infallible evidence of the given inference.

**Conclusion.** The use of hedging, sometimes also called a tentative language or a vague language, is the most complicated to interpret out of its discourse. The functional semantic structure of the pseudo-performative *I think* as a hedge includes the component of epistemic modality which together with components of pragmatic softener, communicative cooperation and approximation make the unit polisemantic and polifunctional. It also softens or reduces certainty / probability of the event under discussion. In the ST and the TT this hedge functional semantics is mostly equivalent, expressing the same degree of certainty. In the rest of cases it is more personalized and degree of vagueness is much stronger in the TT.

Our research has identified that in the English text pseudo-performative *I think* and its synonymic structures are used in the hedging role retaining their secondary component of an epistemic modality feature and revealed the common and differentiative means of expression in the English Text and the parallel Russian Text. *Think* and *думать* are generally considered to be direct equivalents and two-thirds of the occurrences of *think* have been translated as *думать*.

We have also attempted to determine whether English hedging strategies are rendered by equivalent hedges into Russian. The analysis has been carried out on a corpus made up of John Grisham’s novel and its translated counterpart.

The pseudo-performative *I think* has to be further considered in greater detail due to its frequency (41312 occurrences in the BNC) which needs its functional semantic mapping.

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**Михайленко В. В. Про поліфункціональну природу персонального дискурсу-ампліфікатора**

**Анотація.** Персональний дискурс-ампліфікатор, або хедж-маркер невизначеності, привертає увагу мовознавців завдяки інформації, закодованої у ньому. Мета цієї статті – описати функціональну семантику «псевдо-перформативної» матриці з особовим займенником “I + verb (mental)” у мові джерела та мові перекладу з позиції функціональної семантики та дискурсу-аналізу. Визначено, що псевдо-перформатив *I think* та його синонімічні структури виконують головну роль персонального дискурсу-ампліфікатора, при цьому зберігає другорядну функцію епістемічної модальності у МД і МП та вирізняє свої загальні та диференційні функції в англійському та російському паралельних текстах.

**Ключові слова:** хедж (особистий дискурс-ампліфікатор), функціональна семантика, дискурс, переклад, полісемантичний, поліфункціональний.

**Михайленко В. В. О полифункциональной природе персонального дискурсу-амплификатора**

**Аннотация.** Персональный дискурс-амплификатор, или хедж-маркер неопределенности, привлекает внимание лингвистов благодаря информации, закодированной в нём. Цель данной статьи – описать функциональную семантику псевдо-перформативной матрицы с личным местоимением “I + verb (mental)” в ЯО и ЯП с позиции функциональной семантики и дискурсу-анализа. Определено, что псевдо-перформатив *I think* и его эквиваленты выполняют основную роль персонального дискурсу-амплификатора, при этом сохраняют вторичную роль функции маркера эпистемической модальности в ЯИ и ЯП и имеют общие и дифференциальные функции в английском и русском параллельных текстах.

**Ключевые слова:** хедж (персональный дискурсу-амплификатор), функциональная семантика, дискурс, перевод, полисемантический, полифункциональный.