

PHILOLOGICAL SCIENCES

APPEALS TO AGITATION AS A SPECIAL TYPE OF SPEECH ACTS IN SCIENTIFIC DIALOGUE

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Abstract

The article is about describing appeals to agitation (concern, worry, excitement, and bother) as a type of emotive speech acts found in scientific dialogue that contains features of both scientific and everyday speech, which makes the inter-discourse interrelation possible within dialogical forms of scientific communication. This interrelation helps the markers of everyday speech (including appeals to agitation) get into scientific dialogue making the latter more expressive and emotive in comparison with the other genres of scientific discourse (an article, monograph, review, dissertation, presentation, etc.).

Keywords: scientific dialogue, emotive speech act, axiological speech act, expressiveness, inter-discourse, appeals to agitation, speech act, emphasis.

INTRODUCTION

The reflection of human emotions and emotional states in the text is one of the most difficult and urgent problems of modern linguistics and humanities in general [1–7, etc.]. Of special concern are emotions in scientific communication that is traditionally believed to be deprived of emotional traits. However, the dialogical format of scientific speech can serve as a factor of making scientific communication more emotional, in particular through using appeals to emotions.

The paper focuses on **appeals to agitation** as a special type of appeals to emotions represented in scientific dialogue. The term “appeals to agitation” is a general term used with regard to utterances like appeals to worry, concern, excitement, and bother, e. g.:

I'm excited about the high-density meiotic map [8].

But my colleagues are very much here and now, and we worry about what's here now, and that's very far-fetched [9].

Particularly I think there would be a concern if there are so-called allergic manifestations. That bothers me terribly but it may be the case [10].

Although scientific speech is hardly associated with appeals to any emotions (including those of agitation), the dialogical format may dramatically change the expressive and emotional component of scientific communication and make various speech acts be used in it, for instance – appeals to agitation that are of special interest in scientific dialogue as they perform a number of pragmatic functions there.

Thus, the paper **aims** at describing the pragmatic potential of appeals to agitation found in scientific dialogue through defining speech tactics they represent. The **relevance** of the analysis is predetermined by linguists' interest in different classes of texts and utterances, their pragmatic and other peculiarities. The sources of our research material are transcripts of modern scientific discussions (2000 – till today) in different subjects. The main research method is contextual analysis accompanied by the elements of transformational and quantitative (statistical) analysis.

MAIN PART

Our observations show that appeals to agitation are not very common in scientific dialogue (see their quantitative representation in Table 1), but play an important role there.

Table 1.

Appeals to agitation in scientific dialogue (for 250,000 uses of words)

Appeals to concern	Appeals to worry	Appeals to excitement	Appeals to bother
23	9	4	1

Some of the most significant functions that appeals to agitation have are as follows.

1. The expressive role.

The dialogical format of scientific dialogue makes the latter spontaneous and improvisational. This format transforms scientific communication into a hybrid form of speech containing the elements of both scientific and everyday discourse. Features of everyday speech make its characteristics penetrate into academic style, thus violating its norms and making it more expressive and emotional.

One of the elements of everyday discourse that gets into scientific dialogue and makes it emotionally-marked is appeals to agitation.

Appeals to agitation can cooperate with scientific dialogue in two different ways: they can function either as proper appeals to agitation and be a mark of a purely everyday speech or they can be modified according to the standards of scientific discourse, which can be clearly seen in the context below, e. g.:

I'm very worried about “needs” when a patient comes in and tells me that and so therefore I was a little concerned about this little diagram that overlapped conscience with patients' needs [11].

While the first appeal (*I'm very worried about "needs"*) represents a pure indication to worry as thinking about negative events (an affective emotion) that can never (or extremely seldom) be found in scientific monologue, the other reply looks more like a rational assessment rather than a properly emotional one and can even be interpreted as an appeal to interest which is a cognitive emotion quite typical of scientific communication in general (*I was a little concerned* can be transformed into *I was a little interested*). However, there's some difference between appeals to concern as a cognitive emotion functioning in scientific dialogue and those found in monologue scientific genres: the former contains the elements of worry while the latter shows a pure interest.

In some cases, it's difficult to differentiate between appeals to concern as a cognitive emotion and affection, e. g.:

So for scientists involved in that kind of research to be worrying about the modification of such cloned blastocysts or whatever you want to call them, when they don't even know that the whole thing will work, it's just not likely, and I don't think it's because they would shy away from it [10].

While analyzing this sentence, it's really hard to say if we deal with real worries or a sort of interest. Anyway, notwithstanding their status (either affective or cognitive), appeals to agitation always make scientific dialogue sound more expressive as they indicate emotions and imply (or seem to imply) restlessness and emotional arousal. It's clear that indications to affective agitation mark scientific dialogue for emotions more intensively.

2. The axiological role.

Raising the degree of the speech expressive character is not the only function of appeals to agitation. In scientific dialogue, they can also be used for showing positive or negative attitude towards something, thus functioning as a means of general evaluation or a way to express agreement or disagreement with the colleagues' views or a statement, e. g.:

But I think almost everything that you brought up was both interesting, potentially exciting and then we also have all the things [12].

I stressed the vertical relationship because I'm concerned that that's not taught in schools, but I think the horizontal relationship is clearly important [13].

While the first example demonstrates a case of a positive evaluation of the speaker's presentation, a kind of praise and agreement with the colleague's words, the other context shows the speaker's worry and therefore negative assessment of the academic program at school.

So, an appeal to agitation can effectively be used for manifesting the speaker's attitudinal intentions and expressing evaluative meanings.

3. The emphatic role (problem statement).

One of the main strategies of scientific discourse is articulation of the problem and target setting. In scientific dialogue, it can be represented through the use of appeals to agitation that emphasizes some issue, e. g.:

I was really worried about that, not because I'm about to embark on a health career – It's too late in life

for that – but I think that there's a deep misunderstanding there [11].

Let me just intervene here because I'm concerned about both some of the questions and also some of the comments [9].

As can be clearly seen from the sentences above, appeals to agitation are a special way to comment on information and attract the colleagues' intensified attention towards some phenomenon or state of affairs, to show how important the issue is.

4. The dialogical role.

Appeals to agitation can also be qualified as an additional means of implementing the dialogical categories of addressing and authorization, since, on the one hand, appeals to agitation reflect the speaker's presence in a sentence (through which the category of authorization is manifested), while, on the other hand, they are oriented towards the interlocutor and focused on productive communication with him/her (the manifestation of the category of addressing), e. g.:

And the information you hear worries me, that the process is of less concern [14].

The utterance is aimed both at establishing/maintaining contact with the addressee (through the intensified emotional character of the message) and at the revealing the speaker (*worries me*) in scientific discourse making it personified and individual.

CONCLUSION

Summarizing the content of the paper, we should stress that appeals to agitation make a very effective means of communication within scientific dialogue as they can be used for different purposes: raising the degree of expressiveness and emotiveness of communication, manifesting axiological and attitudinal meanings, emphasizing information and making it prominent, as well as dialogizing communication.

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