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IMPLICIT NEGATION IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE: LINGUISTIC MEANS OF EXPRESSION AND FEATURES OF FUNCTIONING

Abstract

This article explores how implicit negation, a form of negation that is not directly expressed in a language, is employed in contemporary English. It analyses lexical, grammatical, and stylistic methods of conveying negative meanings through examples from fiction and everyday conversations. Implicit negation relies on the context and semantics of linguistic units such as negative verbs, prefixes, rhetorical questions, irony, and sarcasm. This highlights the role of implicit negation in politeness strategies and softening of the tone of statements. Understanding implicit negation can deepen the connection between language and thought, with applications in English language teaching, translation, and intercultural communication.

Keywords: means of expressing negation, semantics of negation, pragmatics of negation, negation in discourse, phraseological units with negation, category of negation, implicitness, context, stylistics, rhetorical questions.

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ИМПЛИЦИТНОЕ ОТРИЦАНИЕ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ: ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИЕ СРЕДСТВА ВЫРАЖЕНИЯ И ОСОБЕННОСТИ ФУНКЦИОНИРОВАНИЯ

Аннотация

В статье рассматриваются особенности выражения имплицитного (неявного) отрицания в современном английском языке. На примерах из художественной литературы и повседневной речи семантическим, компонентным и описательным методами анализируются лексические, грамматические и стилистические способы выражения имплицитного отрицания, которое не имеет явных грамматических маркеров. Его значение выводится из контекста и семантики языковых единиц, таких как отрицательные глаголы, префиксы, риторические вопросы, ирония и сарказм. Подчеркивается роль имплицитного отрицания

в реализации принципа вежливости и смягчении категоричности высказывания. Изучение имплицитного отрицания позволяет глубже понять связь языка и мышления, а также нюансы речевой коммуникации. Результаты могут найти применение в области преподавания английского языка, переводческой деятельности и межкультурной коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: средства выражения отрицания, семантика отрицания, прагматика отрицания, отрицание в дискурсе, фразеологизмы с отрицанием, категория отрицания, имплицитность, контекст, стилистика, риторические вопросы.

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АНГЛИС ТИЛИНДЕГИ ИМПЛИЦИТТИК ТЕРС МААНИ: ТИЛДИК ТУЮНТУУ КАРАЖАТТАРЫ ЖАНА ИШТӨӨ ӨЗГӨЧӨЛҮКТӨРҮ

Кыскача мазмуну

Бул макалада азыркы англис тилинде имплициттик (жашыруун) терс мааннилер кандайча колдонулаары изилденет. Имплициттик терс мааннилер тилде түздөн-түз берилбейт, бирок контексттен жана тил бирдиктеринин семантикасынан келип чыгат. Макалада көркөм адабият жана күнүмдүк кептен алынган мисалдардын негизинде терс мааннини берүүнүн лексикалык, грамматикалык жана стилистикалык ыкмалары каралат. Терс мааннидеги этиштер, префикстер, риторикалык суроолор, ирония жана сарказм сыяктуу тил каражаттары имплициттик терс мааниге таянат. Имплициттик терс мааниде сылыктык сактоо жана айтылган ойдун тонун жумшартуу ролу бар экендиги белгиленет. Имплициттик терс мааннини түшүнүү тил менен ой жүгүртүүнүн байланышын тереңдетет жана англис тилин окутууда, котормодо жана маданияттар аралык баарлашууда колдонууга мүмкүнчүлүк берет.

Түйүндүү сөздөр: терс мааннини туюнтуу каражаттары, терс мааннинин семантикасы, терс мааннинин прагматикасы, дискурстагы терс маани, терс мааннидеги фразеологизмдер, терс мааннинин категориясы, имплициттүүлүк, контекст, стилистика, риторикалык суроолор.

The concept of negation has captivated scholars across disciplines, not just linguists but also philosophers. This is because negation is seen as fundamental to both language structure and logical reasoning.

Negation isn't just a linguistic tool; philosophers view it as a cornerstone of logical thought. They see it as a way to understand the relationships between different stages and states in an object's development. Despite the potential for confusion, implicit negation serves a valuable purpose in communication. It allows us to express disagreement, refusal, or opposition in a way that can be less confrontational than direct negation. The hidden nature of implicit negation helps soften the blow of rejection, making communication "smoother" by expressing negativity indirectly.

Dictionaries define negation in several ways, including denial, something nonexistent, and the opposite of something positive. It can also be seen as a logical tool that shows the difference between truth and falsehood, that the

absence of something is just as important as its presence in understanding reality. An object can possess both a characteristic and its absence. This interplay of existence and non-existence helps us truly grasp an object or event.

"Negation is a fundamental building block of language, used to express the idea that things aren't connected in the real world. Interestingly, all languages (a linguistic universal) have ways to express negation, though they might do it in different ways. These methods can involve adding prefixes or suffixes to words (morphological), using specific negative words (lexical), arranging words in a certain order (syntactic), or using grammatical markers (grammatical)" [1, 96 p.]

Implicit negation sneaks in negativity through all sorts of words, like verbs (avoid), adverbs (scarcely), nouns (lack), adjectives (few), prepositions (against), and even conjunctions (but). These words, along with the way they're arranged in a sentence, can all carry a hidden negative meaning. Take these examples: "You should avoid mentioning his divorce" (implies it's a bad idea), "We scarcely ever meet" (implies we rarely see each other), "He lacks confidence" (implies he's insecure), and "Very few of his books are worth reading" (implies that most aren't) [2, 26 p.]

Implicit negation can be used in rhetorical questions like: "Are you ever going to clean your room?" Grammatically, it appears to be a simple question seeking information. However, the context (likely a messy room) and the use of "ever" imply a different intention. "Ever" suggests a long history of the room not being cleaned. The real meaning lies in the underlying assumption. The speaker doesn't actually expect an answer of "yes" because they believe the room is not clean and likely hasn't been cleaned in a long time. Force of the Utterance: The question, therefore, functions as a rhetorical question. It doesn't seek information, but rather expresses exasperation and disapproval about the state of the room. It implies a negative judgment: "You never clean your room!" The implicit negation comes from the combination of "ever" and the context of a messy room. The question expresses a strong negative sentiment indirectly.

Rhetorical questions with implicit negation can be used in various situations, not just for expressing disapproval. They can also be used for emphasis, persuasion, or even humor [3, 21-22pp.]

Implicit negation can also be used in unreal conditionals, for example: "If only I had studied harder" (implies I didn't). This sentence uses implicit negation to express regret about a past action (not studying hard) and its negative consequence (presumably a bad outcome). The sentence uses the unreal conditional structure "If only + past perfect subjunctive + present perfect subjunctive." The focus is on the counterfactual condition - "If only I had studied harder." This condition implies that studying harder didn't happen in reality. The sentence expresses regret about the past situation. It suggests the speaker believes a better outcome would have been possible if they had studied harder (implying they didn't) [3, 26 p.]

However, some argue that implicit negation isn't a true grammatical category. They say it's not a special class because the negative meaning depends on context and isn't directly shown in the sentence structure itself (like with "not").

Let us illustrate this by the following examples: "Will you have some tea or coffee?" "Thank you - but I had some coffee an hour ago". It can easily be inferred from the context that the speaker is trying to avoid direct denial and indirectly rejects the partner, saying, "Thank you - but I had some coffee an hour ago" instead of saying "no", the speaker first thanks his partner and then gives the fact of having coffee an hour ago, it is obvious, however, that, by saying "Thank you" he tends to accept the offer made by the partner with no denial in this context. Besides, the expression "Thank you" in such cases is usually mentioned as the rejection of a kind, more polite form in communication. For this reason, we often prefer milder means of expressing negation, especially when we

do not want to sound rude. As a result the act of communication of this kind do not undergo special rules. Negation, arising out of such implicit form, pushes to grasp the meaning from the analysis of communication. So, in that form of communication, we have implicit negation.

Some forms of implicit negation can be connected with stylistic effects of communication, for example: "That is a failing indeed!" cried Elizabeth. "Implacable resentment is a shade in a character. But you have chosen your fault well" [4, 37p.]. This sentence can serve as an example of implicit negation because of the absence of explicit "No" and we see the use of sarcasm: "That is a failing indeed!" - This seemingly agrees with him, but the tone is sarcastic, implying the opposite. The following statement "Implacable resentment is a shade in a character." - This explains why his "fault" is bad. And the use of the conditional statement: "But you have chosen your fault well." - implies Mr. Darcy's choice of flaw is deliberate and unattractive. Through these techniques, Elizabeth indirectly conveys her disapproval of Mr. Darcy's character flaw and suggests a lack of interest in him. This is a clear example of implicit negation, where the negative meaning is conveyed through context and tone rather than explicit negation.

Our analysis reveals that negation is a fascinating but complex concept in language. Its structure and meaning (semantics) make it a powerful tool for how we express knowledge using natural language. Interestingly, all languages seem to have ways to express negation. However, its core function goes beyond just structure. Negation allows us, the speakers, to reveal our attitudes and opinions towards the things and events we discuss.

We can express "no" in sneaky ways! Language offers tools like negative adverbs (rarely, hardly), quantifiers (few, nobody), special sentence structures (wish clauses), and hidden meanings in verbs (forget). These are all part of implicit negation. In everyday conversation, being polite is key. It's like the glue that holds communication together and helps us avoid misunderstandings.

Explicit vs. Implicit Negation:

"Despite these variations, all these cases (overt, syntactic, or "only"-like) are considered "explicit negation" because the negative meaning is directly conveyed in the sentence. In contrast, "implicit negation" refers to situations where the negative meaning isn't directly stated but rather implied or inferred by the listener. The passage mentions "emotive factive predicates" as an example (these will be explained later, likely in another section)"[5].

The key takeaway is that negative meaning can come from two sources:

Explicit Assertion: This is when the sentence itself directly states the negation (e.g., "John didn't go").

Non-Asserted Content: This is where the negative meaning is implied or inferred from the context, not directly stated (e.g., "John forgot his keys" might imply he doesn't have them anymore).

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