



Article

Pragmatic Features of Subject–Object Relations

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Abstract: This article analyzes the pragmatic features of subject–object relations based on linguistic, cognitive, and communicative approaches. It examines not only the grammatical nature of subjects and objects but also their functioning in speech situations, social contexts, and communicative strategies. Speech acts, subject centralization, pragmatic activity of objects, and implicit meanings are also discussed. The findings demonstrate that subject–object relations are dynamic, variable, and pragmatically significant in discourse.

Keywords: Object, Subject, Pragmatics, Speech Act, Discourse, Cognitive Linguistics, Communicative Strategy, Cohesion, Subject Centralization, Implicit Meaning

1. Introduction

In modern linguistics, it has become increasingly important to study the process of speech not only from grammatical and semantic perspectives, but also in terms of its communicative, functional, and pragmatic aspects. In particular, the expression of relationships between the subject and the object in speech, as well as their pragmatic load, demonstrates the direct connection between language and human activity[1]. Although the categories of subject and object were initially studied as syntactic units, in contemporary research they are analyzed in relation to communicative purpose, speech situation, and social context. This article explores the pragmatic features of subject–object relations based on linguistic, cognitive, and communicative approaches[2].

In linguistics, the subject is typically interpreted as the performer of an action, while the object is considered the element affected by that action. However, this definition operates primarily at the syntactic level. From a pragmatic perspective, the subject functions as the speaker or communicative center, whereas the object represents the target or focus of the utterance[3]. For example, in the sentence “I read the book,” “I” is the grammatical subject and “the book” is the object; however, pragmatically, “I” may serve as the center of speech, while “the book” can become the focus of information. Thus, the roles of subject and object exhibit a dynamic character that shifts depending on the context of speech[4].

Pragmatics studies how linguistic units are used in real speech processes. In this process, the relationship between the subject and the object is manifested through speech acts. In every speech act, the speaker (subject), the listener, and the content (object) are interconnected. For example, in imperative sentences, the subject is often implicit: “Close the door!” Here, although the grammatical subject is not expressed, a pragmatic subject exists, namely the person giving the command. The object, however, is clearly expressed

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through “the door.” This situation demonstrates that the subject and object can be realized differently at the pragmatic level[5].

Subject centralization in speech is one of the important pragmatic phenomena. The speaker may organize speech by placing themselves at the center or, conversely, by foregrounding the object. For example: “I did this work” represents subject-centered speech, whereas “This work was done” reflects object-centered, passive construction. In the second case, the subject is hidden or deemphasized. This is often used to reduce responsibility or to shift attention to the result. Thus, the relationship between subject and object functions as a communicative strategy[6].

In traditional approaches, the object is interpreted as a passive element. However, pragmatic analysis shows that the object can also play an active role in speech. In particular, within the theme–rheme structure, the object often serves as the carrier of new information. For example, in the sentence “It was the book that I read,” the object (“the book”) is brought to the foreground and emphasized. This indicates that the communicative significance of the object has increased[7].

Literature Review

In the study titled “Anthropocentric Approach in Uzbek Linguistics” by D. Xudoyberganova, the central role of the human factor in modern linguistics is thoroughly analyzed. The author interprets language not merely as a system, but as a phenomenon closely interconnected with human cognition, culture, and social activity. This approach serves as an important theoretical foundation for examining subject–object relations from a pragmatic perspective, as it considers the subject as the central figure of speech[8].

In M. Mohiraxon’s article “Linguocultural Studies in English and Uzbek Languages,” the interrelationship between language and culture is examined through comparative analysis. The author demonstrates how national thinking, values, and communicative features are expressed through linguocultural units. This research substantiates the significant role of cultural factors in the expression of subject and object in speech[9].

In T. Djurayeva’s work “Linguocultural Analysis of Color-Expressing Units,” the semantic and cultural layers of language are revealed through the concept of color. The author emphasizes that color units carry not only lexical meaning but also pragmatic and emotional load. This indicates that the object in speech can function not only as a grammatical element, but also as a communicative and semantic center[10].

Overall, these studies reveal the interconnection between anthropocentric, linguocultural, and pragmatic approaches, thereby providing a solid theoretical basis for analyzing subject–object relations within a broader scientific context[11].

2. Methodology

In this study, a comprehensive methodological approach was applied to investigate the pragmatic features of subject–object relations. The empirical basis of the research consists of more than 50 speech samples used in various communicative situations, which were analyzed from both syntactic and pragmatic perspectives. During the analysis, the roles of the subject and the object in speech, their explicit and implicit expressions, as well as their communicative centralization were identified and clarified.

Using the descriptive method, the grammatical and pragmatic characteristics of subject and object categories were explained. Through the comparative-analytical method, active and passive constructions (“I did it” / “It was done”) were compared in order to examine subject centralization and the communicative activity of the object.

In addition, based on a cognitive approach, the subject and object were analyzed as conceptual units in human cognition, and their roles in the process of perception were determined. Through discourse analysis, the alternation of subject and object within the text, as well as referential relations and cohesion phenomena, were examined.

Furthermore, through pragmatic analysis, cases such as the implicitness of the subject and the transformation of the object into the center of information within speech acts (commands, questions, statements) were identified, and their significance as communicative strategies was substantiated.

3. Results and discussion

In cognitive linguistics, the subject and the object are regarded as conceptual categories formed through human cognition. In perceiving reality, a person considers themselves as the subject, while the external world is viewed as the object[12]. In this process, language structures reality: the subject is an active, controlling element, whereas the object is an element that undergoes or is affected by an action, or is perceived. However, in actual speech, these boundaries may shift. For example, in sentences expressing emotional states, the object moves closer to the subject: "I liked this." Here, although "this" is the object, it carries a central semantic role[13].

The relationship between subject and object is also closely connected with social factors. Hierarchy in speech, forms of politeness, and status relations influence how the subject is expressed[14]. For example, "We will carry out what you said" reflects a position in which the subject presents itself as lower in status, whereas "I ordered it" expresses a higher status. In some cases, the subject is deliberately omitted: "A mistake was made." This functions as a strategy to generalize or conceal responsibility[15].

In discourse, the subject and object alternate with each other. An element that functions as an object in one sentence may become the subject in the next. This ensures textual coherence. For example: "I bought a book. It turned out to be very interesting"[16]. Here, "the book" is the object in the first sentence and becomes the subject in the second. This process ensures referential linkage and textual cohesion (the connection of sentences within a text through linguistic means)[17].

Subject-object relations often convey implicit meanings as well. The speaker may communicate an idea indirectly through these relations without stating it explicitly. For example: "Who did this work?" – a question. "This work was done." – a response, but the subject is hidden. The implicit meaning here is the absence of intention to reveal the subject[18].

The pragmatic features of subject-object relations demonstrate that language is not limited to a purely grammatical system, but is closely connected with human cognition, social relations, and communicative strategies. The subject and object interact dynamically in speech, and their roles change depending on context, purpose, and situation[19]. The analysis shows that the subject is not always explicitly expressed, yet it remains pragmatically present. The object is not merely passive; it can become the communicative center. Subject-object relations function as a communicative strategy, and these relations are shaped by social and psychological factors. Thus, studying subject-object relations from a pragmatic perspective allows for a deeper understanding of the connection between language and human activity[20].

4. Conclusion

Subject-object relations in the language system manifest not only as grammatical units but also as important pragmatic phenomena. Their function in speech has a dynamic character, varying according to the communicative situation, social context, and communicative purpose.

Although the subject is not always explicitly expressed, it remains pragmatically present and serves as the central element of speech. The object, in turn, moves beyond its traditionally passive role and actively participates as the carrier of informational focus and communicative emphasis.

Furthermore, subject–object relations function as a communicative strategy in speech, playing a significant role in expressing implicit meanings, directing attention, and reflecting social relations.

The pragmatic study of these relations makes it possible to gain a deeper understanding of the close connection between language and human cognition, social environment, and communicative activity.

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