

UDC 811.111'42"46"(045)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32589/2311-0821.1.2020.207238>

## AGE-RELATED CONVERSATIONS IN ANGLO-AMERICAN LITERARY DISCOURSE: A LINGUOPRAGMATIC ASPECT

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**The recommended citation for this publication is:** Pozhar, A. (2020). Age-related conversations in Anglo-American literary discourse: A linguopragmatic aspect. *Herald of Kyiv National Linguistic University. Series in Philology*, 23(1), 84-93. ISSN 2415-7333 (online), ISSN 2311-0821 (print)

### Abstract

The paper focuses on the problem of age-related conversations which are analyzed from the point of view of their speech acts characteristics. Such types of speech acts as expressives, direct and indirect representatives, directives and commissives have been specified from the viewpoint of their illocutionary subtypes on the criteria of "hedged-unhedged", "direct-indirect", "idiomatic-inferential", "actual-pseudo". The paper reveals and describes the most and less frequently used types of speech acts.

**Key words:** age-related conversations, literary discourse, speech acts, illocutionary force, expressives, representatives, directives and commissives.

### 1. Introduction

The paper addresses the problem of age-related conversations in the framework of speech acts theory. The concept of age has invariably been the focus not only in linguistics but also in psychology, sociology, political science, etc. The choice of the research topic is due to insufficient study of the age associated matters from the pragmatic viewpoints.

Verbal means related to age nomination, description, and evaluation are often pragmatically marked in conversational discourse, given the delicacy of age-related topics, which may be perceived as a face threat to one or both of the interactors. In addition, the pragmatic specifics of age-related conversations may result from the social and age status inequality of people, which also involves additional pragmatic meanings and their manifesting devices. Pragmatic meanings may also be triggered by the mismatch of the communicative behaviour of one of the interlocutors to age stereotypes. Sometimes the characters' pragmatic behaviour is itself a sign of belonging to a certain age category.

The pragmatic aspect of age-marking devices still remains unexplored in Ukrainian linguistic research and is only fragmentarily studied by American and European scholars (Coupland, 2004; Giles, 1989; Heinrichsmeier, 2020; Nussbaum, 2004). Most investigations (Leech, 2014; Kravchenko, 2017b; Searle, 1976) are devoted to various aspects of verbal and non-verbal communication practices in relation to ageing, which is studied as interactive process that leads to understanding the problems of age and growing old.

The pragmatics of spoken language relevant to the designation and characterization of age categories is primarily studied in the works that focus on negotiating and constructing ageing identities in every day talks, i.e. through manipulation of stereotypes of ageing. In particular, in the framework of conversational analysis and sociolinguistics the impact of the "evolving talk" on the positive identity constructions of ageing people is comprehensively analyzed by Nussbaum (2004), Coupland (2004), Giles (1989), Heinrichsmeier (2020), Westerhof and Tulle (2007) and other scientists.

One of the main tasks, which are solved nowadays, deals with communication within generations in family environment (between grandparents, grandchildren and siblings) (Giles et al, 2003; McKay, Caverly, 2004). In view of age-related differences in conversation styles and conversational pragmatics regarding, in particular, politeness strategies and face-threatening acts, intergenerational interaction is worth of scientific investigation (Lin et al, 2008). For example, scientists found out that women in their 30s and 40s communicating with women in their 70s and older often presume speaking rights and conversational access to their older partners, non-reciprocally (Coupland et al, 1993). The younger women conversational style was intrusive and negative face-threatening. However, their elderly communication partners approved such style as showing certain interest in their personal life (that is corresponding to positive politeness strategies).

One of the focuses in modern foreign linguistics relates to the strategic aspect of communication of young and elderly adults in the framework of the age-bound strategies in a community setting (Harwood et al, 1993).

To the extent of our knowledge, the issue of illocutionary properties of age-related conversations remains unexplored in pragmatic studies, both in terms of identifying types of speech acts regularly associated with such conversations and their illocutionary functions in interplay with other pragmatic phenomena.

The study arises such new paths for research: 1) it is for the first time in Ukrainian and foreign linguistics when age-related conversations are analyzed in terms of their speech acts characteristics; 2) hedged / unhedged and idiomatic / inferential criteria are used for the first time in the speech acts analysis of dialogues; 3) the concept of pseudo-speech act has been first coined and introduced into scientific circulation.

## 2. Material and methods

The **aim** of the paper is in-depth investigation of age-related talks in English-based literary discourse in terms of their illocutionary properties. The multifaceted research objectives are as follows: (a) to identify the most common types of speech acts used to describe and characterize age meanings; (b) to specify the acts based on the criteria "hedged / unhedged", "direct / indirect" with idiomatic and inferential illocutionary force; (c) to justify the category of pseudo-speech act. To identify the speech acts properties of age-related conversations the paper is based on a **qualitative approach** (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Silverman, 2001; Strauss and Corbin, 1990), consisting of identification and multifaceted specification of speech acts based on different criteria. The **integrative method** applied in the paper differs from traditional speech acts approach in introducing the multifaceted specification of illocutionary force based on the criteria: "hedged / unhedged", "direct / indirect", "idiomatic / inferential", "actual / pseudo". The **material** under consideration includes age-related dialogues, which are taken from English-based literary discourse of American and British authors of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and exemplify the different types of speech acts and their manifesting devices. The paper primarily used the explanatory tools of speech acts theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1976, p. 1-23), added by the elements of form / function pragmatics – to identify correlation between the utterance illocutionary force and its formal-structural markers (Ariel, 2012, p. 30) as well as by the method based on face and politeness theory (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Johnson et al, 2004; Leech, 2014).

## 3. Results and discussion

### 3.1. Age-associated talks: Representatives vs. Expressives

The analysis of data proves that the most frequent speech acts applied in age-related talks involve representatives, which is understandable given the illocutionary force of such acts, providing information about the age of the person as in (1-3), describing characteristics associated with the age stereotypes as in (4-6) and sharing one's opinion related to age-based matters as in (7).

- (1) "She's fifteen years younger than I am" (Steel, 2003a, p. 23).
- (2) "I have a daughter. She's twenty-three" (Steel, 2003a, p. 64).
- (3) "My daughter is twenty-four, and my son is nineteen" (Steel, 2003a, p. 319).
- (4) "The men my age are so boring and immature" (Steel, 2003a, p. 154).
- (5) "At your age the world is full of eligible young men" (Steel, 2003a, p. 154).
- (6) "At my age, I don't need to get married" (Steel, 2003a, p. 376).
- (7) "Older, younger, same age. Fifty-year-old women have twenty-five-year-old boyfriends. Seventy-year-old men marry thirty-year-old and have babies" (Steel, 2003a, p. 338).

One identifies the set of representatives where a comment in the second part forms a cause and effects relationships with the reported age meaning as in (8-9), or age descriptors are associated with the age nominatives as in (10).

- (8) "How old are her boys? " – "Five and seven, they're very young" (Steel, 2003a, p. 23).
- (9) "You're forty-six years old, you can't give up on your life now" (Steel, 2003a, p. 61).
- (10) "But I'm fifty-eight years old, I don't have the energy for a young girl, and I'd feel foolish with one. Richard is ten years younger than I am, that makes a difference" (Steel, 2003a, p. 376).

Dialogues relevant to the discussion of age do not display representatives introduced by factual verbs (know, be aware, regret, realize, discover, remember, notice), which *ipso facto* may confer these acts with maximum degree of assertive illocutionary force (since the speaker who uses them thereby assumes the obligation to be truthful).

Instead, the representative "introducing" verbs *think* and *guess* reduce the degree of assertive illocution as in (11-12).

- (11) She's thirty-one years old. I guess that's hard to compete with (Steel, 2003a, p. 198).
- (12) "I think you're beautiful and young, and men are going to be lined up ten deep at your door" (Steel, 2003a, p. 154).

Along with the direct acts of representatives, the research has also identified isolated cases of representatives with the expressive illocutionary force. Such speech acts, which in formal terms look like representations, actually constitute indirect expressives, since their illocutionary force is not a statement of facts, but an expression of feelings and emotions about the information presented by the propositional content as in:

- (13) "How old is she?" Paris asked in a dead voice. "Thirty-one," he said softly. "Oh my God. She's twenty years younger than you are. And eight years older than Meg", Wim added with a somber expression (Steel, 2003a, p. 22).

Thus, the markers of expressive illocution in (13) involve the emphatic structure "Oh my God" and the prosodic marker "in a dead voice" as the emotional indexes of hopelessness and disappointment. Accordingly, the statement of the fact "She's twenty years younger than you are" also expresses the illocutionary force of disapproval. With that, the negative assessment of things, related to the age difference, becomes the main communicative focus of the utterance, providing its expressive illocution.

Similarly, the move that completes the speech exchange, "And eight years older than Meg", should also be interpreted as one in which the individual-evaluative connotations are prioritized over information regarding age, as it is evidenced by the non-verbal marker – kinetic facial sign ("with a somber expression").

It should be noted that such speech acts as expressives are interpreted in the paper more widely than they were defined by Searle (1976, p. 1-23), who coined this term. In particular, we use the definition of expressives introduced by Wolf (2002, p. 166-167), who means any individual-evaluative statements on the scale of "approval – disapproval", "good – bad". In other words, conveying an emotional attitude turns into an independent illocutionary meaning (for comparison, according to Searle, expressives are only "etiquette" acts of congratulation, wishes, apologies, condolences, sanctioned by social conventions of communicative behaviour).

In (14), the expressive illocution of negative evaluation and disapproval of the lovers' age gap is implied by a comparison referred to the "abnormal" state of things, which contradicts the norms of logic and morality (implicature: the behaviour of a woman who meets a man much younger than her age is just as unnatural as if the addressee of such an assessment personally meets a four-year-old child).

(14) "That's like me going out with a four-year-old," he said to bring the point home. Paris got it. He was upset. "Not exactly. He's a grown man." "What's he doing with a woman your age?" Wim said in a tone of disapproval (Steel, 2003a, p. 342).

The identified expressive illocution is confirmed by a non-verbal marker of facial expression ("He was upset"), a rhetorical question in the continuation of the speech move ("What's he doing with a woman your age?") and a prosodic marker ("in a tone of disapproval").

In addition to indirect expressives, the character's speech also reveals direct speech acts with expressive illocution, containing structural indicators of primary illocutionary force, such as in (15-19).

(15) "Can you imagine anything more ridiculous than being out there on dates at my age? It's so humiliating, and so depressing" (Steel, 2003a, p. 200).

(16) "And I can't believe that at my age, I have to go out there like some dumb kid and date. How disgusting is that? And pathetic" (Steel, 2003a, p. 250).

(17) "I hate to think I've got to grow up, and be Miss March, and wear long gowns, and look as prim as a China aster!" (Alcott, 2018, p. 3).

(18) "A little girl coming here, Miss Harrington? Oh, won't that be nice!" cried Nancy (Porter, 2018, p. 7).

In (15), the expressive illocution is indicated by the semantics of the words "humiliating" and "depressing". The degree of illocutionary force is intensified by the adverb "so", modifying a subsequent adjective, as well as the rhetorical structure with hyperonization ("anything more ridiculous than").

In (16), emotional tension is enhanced by emphatic constructions "How disgusting is that? I can't believe that".

In (17), the expressive illocution is based on the semantics of the verb "hate", which expresses the speaker's hatred of the fact of her growing-up, as well as enhanced by the emphatic exclamative utterance and syntactic-stylistic device of polysyndeton – a three-time repetition of the conjunction "and" to highlight characteristics associated with the hated age category of "adulthood".

In (18), expressive illocution is explicated by the emotional exclamation "Oh", and emphatic construction "Oh, won't that be nice!" in combination with the non-verbal prosodic signal "cried".

(19) presents a set of both verbal and non-verbal markers of expressive allocation.

(19) "How sad it is!" murmured Dorian Gray, with his eyes still fixed upon his own portrait. "How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrid, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular day of June. If it was I who were to be always young, and the picture that were to grow old! For this – for this – I would give everything! Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give!" (Wild, 2005, p. 42).

Thus, the verbal means in (19) include the repetition of the emphatic construction "How sad it is!", "If it was!", a number of exclamatory sentences, adjectives with the same "horrible", which become synonyms and descriptors of old age (grow old, and horrid, and dreadful), repetition of filled and unfilled hesitation pauses ("For this – for this – ") to convey the highest degree of excitement (when words are lacking to convey emotions). Among non-verbal indicators of expressive illocution – prosodic device "murmured" showing intense emotional excitement, as well as kinetic / facial marker (frozen look): "his eyes still fixed upon his own portrait".

The verbal and non-verbal markers indicate compliance with the felicity condition of "sincerity" as the psychological state of the speaker, which is the basic criterion for the expressives successfulness. Moreover, specified markers increase the degree of expressive illocution (as expressives, like any other speech acts, differ in the strength of their illocutionary force).

### **3.2. Age-related directives: hedged-unhedged, direct-indirect, idiomatic-inferential**

In addition to representatives and expressives, the third type of acts identified in the speech of characters in Anglo-American literary discourse involves directives – both direct (hedged and unhedged) and indirect.

Direct directives are commonly used among family members or other close people in communicative situations of advice or suggestions referring to certain age-related behaviour patterns, as in (20-22), where the direct directive illocution is structurally marked by an imperative verb form.

(20) "Realize your youth while you have it. Don't squander the gold of your days. Live! Live the wonderful life that is in you!" (Wild, 2005, p. 36).

(21) "Never trust a woman who wears mauve, whatever her age may be, or a woman over thirty-five who is fond of pink ribbons" (Wild, 2005, p. 117).

(22) "You're a lot older and wiser than she is, and stronger. If you're not serious about her, don't play with her, and don't hurt her" (Steel, 2003a, p. 298).

In (22), a direct directive is mitigated by a negative politeness marker (a conditional sentence "If you're not serious about her") that weakens an imposition, as well as positively connotated age descriptors "wiser" and "stronger" as the positive politeness markers.

The direct directives in the examples above implement a bald on record politeness strategy that is mostly used between close people and therefore not perceived as a threat to the interlocutor's face, which in some way limits his / her freedom of actions.

Indirect directives (those that do not incorporate performative verbs or grammatical form of the imperative as the structural indicators of directive illocution) are most often "accomplished" by means of representatives, as in (23-26). That is, the true directive intention of such acts is expressed by indicators marking another illocutionary goal.

(23) "You can't give up on life at forty-six, Mom. That's crazy" (Steel, 2003a, p. 95).

Thus, in (23) can't + verb denotes the fact that the interlocutor cannot give up something, constituting thus a structural indicator of the representative. Along with this, the true illocutionary purpose (or, in Searle's terminology, the main illocutionary act) is "Do not give up life!" Correspondingly, the secondary act (literal meaning) contains assertive illocution (it is impossible to give up life at 46).

(24) "I don't want a man your age coming along and breaking her heart" (Steel, 2003a, p. 298).

Similarly, "I don't want" in (24), which explicitly expresses the desire to prevent a certain action, marks the secondary illocutionary act of the representative, although the primary directive illocution is easily inferred as a prohibited act ("Don't meet her, don't break her heart!").

(25) "You are old enough to leave off boyish tricks, and to behave better, Josephine ... you should remember that you are a young lady" (Alcott, 2018, p. 3).

In (25) an indication of the age of the interlocutor and his behaviour, which is not associated with that age ("You are old enough to leave off boyish tricks") explicitly marks the representative. Instead, the implicated, that is primary illocutionary act of the "suggestion" has a directive illocution ("Leave off boyish tricks!").

Sometimes a complex speech act can combine directives with explicit and implicit illocutionary force, as in (26).

(26) "Then plan something. You can't be a slave forever, Sarah. You'll wind up an old maid." She laughed (Steel, 2006b, p. 14).

Thus, in (26) a direct advice ("plan something!") is supported by subsequent directive illocution ("Get rid of lifelong slavery!") in the indirect act ("You can't be a slave") and is mitigated by the last phrase with implicit conditional meaning ("if you do not heed the advice and take action, you will end up old maid"). That is, the final phrase "satisfies" such criterion of felicity condition for the directive act of warnings as the speaker's confidence that the event will occur and be detrimental to the hearer.

Directives identified in the characters' speech in English-based literary discourse differ in the degree of implicitness of their illocutionary force. In particular, in all given examples, the primary (basic) directive illocution is not contextually-bound, i.e. such acts are idiomatic. In English, idiomatic speech acts of directives are often marked by particular devices called the whimperative (Sadock, 1972), including "Would you...?", "Why don't you tell", "You can't", etc. On the other hand, in addition to idiomatic directive acts, the characters' speech revealed indirect inferential acts (Gordon & Lakoff, 1975; Levinson, 1983; Kravchenko, 2017b), which are more implicit being based on both presuppositional and contextual knowledge.

(27) "It should matter everything to you, Mr. Gray." "Why?" "Because you have now the most marvelous youth, and youth is the one thing worth having"(Wild, 2005, p. 35).

In (27), the directive illocution of advice acquires additional propositional meaning ("Treat your youth responsibly as the highest value!") only in the context of the whole dialogue, as evidenced by the counter speech move of the interlocutor "Why?", which requires the disclosure of the advice.

Such a speech act is not only inferential but also transposed, since its illocution is not only specified by context, but also changes the type of act from the representative to directive (on the distinction between different types of indirect speech acts: idiomatic, inferential, transposed, non-transposed – see in detail at: Kravchenko, 2017a, 2017b, 2019). It should be noted that the vast majority of indirect acts are transposed, including acts in (23-27).

At the same time, in addition to the transposed ones, isolated cases of non-transposed speech acts (i.e. acts in which the primary illocution does not change the type of act) have also been identified.

(28) "Don't be stupid, Mom. You're still young. And you look great" (Steel, 2006b, p. 253-254).

In particular, in (28) the direct directive is marked with an imperative structure. However, the propositional (meaningful) component of directive illocution is interpreted only in the context related to the designation of age characteristics: "Don't be stupid" is interpreted as "behave like a young woman, date men!".

Therefore, this type of act is an inferential but non-transposed speech act (when the primary illocution becomes an additional meaning that does not change the type of act – that is, the directive remains a directive, but acquires additional meaning).

### 3.3. Commissives and pseudo-commissives in age-related discussions

The least widespread type of the identified speech acts encompasses the commissives, represented by single examples as in (29-30).

(29) "Youth is the only thing worth having. When I find that I am growing old, I will kill myself" (Wild, 2005, p. 43).

(30) "And if turning up my hair makes me one, I'll wear it in two tails till I'm twenty" cried Jo. (Alcott, 2018, p. 3).

The speaker in (29) is sincere that youth is the only value in his life, that is, with the loss of youth his life will be meaningless; the speaker in (30) really believes that wearing tails can delay the process of her adulthood). However, the illocutionary force of the acts is mitigated by subordinate clause of time ("When I find that I am growing old") in (29) and conditional clause in (30).

The underlined above acts are specified as indirect commissives as they meet a set of felicity conditions: 1) a condition of the propositional content relating to the future act of the speaker, which he promises to carry out; 2) a condition of the possibility of the act performed by the speaker; 3) a condition of sincerity, which is set by the context.

(31) Fifty seemed to Benjamin a glorious age. He longed passionately to be fifty. "I've always said," went on Hildegarde, "that I'd rather marry a man of fifty and be taken care of than many a man of thirty and take care of him" (Fitzgerald, 2014, p. 16-17).

In (31), the condition of sincerity (the speaker's actual intention to perform the promised action) is indexed by the perfect time, indicating the permanence and relevance of the speaker's "way" of thinking, and the adverb "always" ("I've always said"), as well as by providing an implicit basis for the fulfillment of the promise as being in the interest of the speaker ("it is better to be taken care of by a mature man than to take care of someone younger than you").

In the dialogues of the characters, there are also identified single cases of pseudo-commissives.

(32) "There's got to be someone, sweetheart. At your age the world is full of eligible young men" (Steel, 2003a, p. 154).

(33) "A portrait like this would set you far above all the young men in England, and make the old men quite jealous, if old men are ever capable of any emotion" (Wild, 2005, p. 4).

(34) "Some day, when you are old and wrinkled and ugly, when thought has seared your forehead with its lines, and passion branded your lips with its hideous fires, you will feel it, you will feel it terribly" (Wild, 2005, p. 35).

(35) "The right one will come along, for you, if not for me" (Steel, 2003a, p. 253).

Thus, in (32-35) it is possible to infer the illocution of a promise: "I promise that in your life there will be a young man," "I promise that this portrait will set you far above all the young men in England, and make the old men quite jealous", "I promise you will feel it when you get old".

However, such acts may be considered as the pseudo-commissives. On the one hand, they satisfy such a felicity condition of commissives as performing an act in the interests of the listener. On the other hand, they do not meet such a basic criterion of commissives successful performance as the possibility of the speaker to realize the promised action. Despite the commissive illocution, these acts cannot achieve their purpose as the speaker is unable to influence their fulfillment.

#### 4. Conclusions

The paper identifies that the most common type of speech acts which characterize age meanings and age-related situations is represented by direct representatives (simple and complex) providing information about the age of the characters and age-associated behavioural stereotypes. Direct and indirect expressives, also often employed in age-related dialogues, convey the illocutionary force of emotional and evaluative attitudes of speakers regarding their own and other's age, the processes of aging and adulthood and the difference in age. In some cases, kinetic signs have been identified in the expressive function.

Directives with the illocutionary force of advice, suggestion or prohibition concerning the age-related behaviour of the addressee are less frequent. The paper distinguishes between direct (hedged and unhedged) and indirect directives, which differ in their idiomatic and inferential illocutions, correlating with degree of the acts' implicitness.

Indirect commissives and pseudo-commissives constitute the least frequent type of speech acts, used in age-related talks. The pseudo-type does not meet such a basic criterion of commissives as the speaker's ability to realize the promised action.

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### **Résumé**

The paper focuses on the problem of age-related conversations specified from the viewpoint of their illocutionary properties. The research aims at the identification of speech acts regularly used to describe and characterize age; such acts specification according to multifaceted criteria: "hedged / unhedged", "direct / indirect", "idiomatic / inferential", as well as introducing the category of pseudo-speech act. Based on in-depth analysis of age-related dialogues collected from English-based literary discourse and applying the integrative method of research, which involves speech acts explanatory tools, form / function pragmatics and face and politeness approach, the paper has three major findings.

Age meanings and age-related situations in the dialogues of the characters are most regularly specified by speech acts of direct representatives (both simple and complex) with assertive illocution of statements about the age and age-associated behavioural stereotypes. Direct and indirect expressives represent the second type of age-associated speech acts in the characters' conversations. Expressive illocutionary force conveys emotional and evaluative attitudes of speakers regarding their own and other's age, the processes of aging and adulthood, as well as the difference in age. Less frequent are directives with the illocutionary force of advice, suggestion or prohibition related the age-associated behaviour of the addressee. The least frequent group includes indirect commissives and pseudo-commissives. The identified direct directives differ in their formal-structural markers of illocutionary force, correlating with unhedged face threatening acts, appropriate in close relationships, and with hedged negative politeness strategies to lessen the damaged effect of age-related matters. Indirect directives are differentiated into idiomatic and inferential subtypes, which correlate with degree of their implicitness and context-boundness. The paper coins and justifies the term "pseudo-commissives", designating the acts with illocution of promise that the speaker is not able to fulfill.

**Key words:** age-related conversations, literary discourse, speech acts, illocutionary force, expressives, representatives, directives and commissives.

### **Анотація**

Стаття присвячена аналізу асоційованих із віком людини розмов, що розглянено в аспекті їхніх іллокутивних властивостей. Дослідницькі завдання передбачають виявлення мовленнєвих актів, які регулярно використовуються для опису та характеристики вікових значень і специфікації таких актів за критеріями: "хеджований / нехеджований", "прямий / непрямий", "ідіоматичний / інференційний", а також впровадження категорії "псевдо-мовленнєвий акт".

На основі інтегративного методу дослідження із залученням актомовленнєвого аналізу, формально-функціонального прагматичного аналізу, а також методики, базованої на теорії обличчя і ввічливості в роботі проаналізовано низку діалогів, відібраних з англійського художнього дискурсу, в яких експліковано ті чи інші вікові характеристики.

Вікові значення і асоційовані з обговоренням віку ситуації в діалогах художнього дискурсу персонажів найбільш регулярно відтворюються за допомогою мовленнєвих актів прямих репрезентативів (як простих, так і складних) з асертивною іллокуцією тверджень про вік і про поведінкові стереотипи, пов'язані з певним віком. Другим типом мовленнєвих актів, представлених в обговореннях персонажами віку людини, є прямі і непрямі експресиви. Експресивна іллокутивна сила передає емоційне та оцінне ставлення мовців до власного віку і віку іншої людини, процесів старіння і дорослішання, різниці у віці. Менш частотними в дослідженому матеріалі є директиви з іллокутивною силою поради, пропозиції або заборони, що стосуються асоційованої з віком поведінки адресата. Найменш поширена група мовленнєвих актів включає непрямі комісиви і псевдо-комісиви.

Ідентифіковані прямі директиви (нехеджовані і хеджовані) відрізняються формально-структурними маркерами іллокутивної сили, корелюючи, з одного боку, з нехеджованими актами загрози обличчю, що застосовуються в ситуаціях спілкування близьких людей, і, з іншого

боку, з хеджованими стратегіями негативної ввічливості, що вживаються з метою зменшення "шкоди" обличчю інтрактанта, яка може виникнути внаслідок обговорення вікових питань. Непрямі директиви диференціюються на ідіоматичні та інференційні акти, що відрізняються рівнем своєї імпліцитності і контекстуальної залежності. У статті впроваджено й обґрунтовано термін "псевдо-комісив" на позначення актів з іллокуцією обіцянки, яку мовець не в змозі виконати. **Ключові слова:** розмови про вік, художній дискурс, іллокутивна сила, мовленнєві акти, експресиви, репрезентативи, директиви, комісиви.

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Received by the editorial board 27.03.2020;  
Reviewed 23.04.2020. and 24.04.2020;  
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