Linguacultural and Pragmatic Features of Maxims and Aphorisms of the English Language

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Abstract

This paper focuses on how maxims and aphorisms can be treated as an explanatory variable in linguacultural and pragmatic studies. All too frequently in pragmatics, no explanation of any cultural differences are given at all; similarities and differences are simply identified. Yet incorporating an explanatory element is essential if we are to deepen our understanding of language use across cultures. One of the frameworks used most frequently in pragmatics to explain cross-cultural differences are works of Leech and Grice. However, this paper argues that we need to move from the notion of meaning of maxims and aphorisms to socio-pragmatic interactional principles (henceforth SIPs), and that this will yield a more powerful and fruitful way of explaining cross-cultural pragmatic findings of these linguistic phenomena.

Keywords: Maxims; Aphorisms; Linguacultural; Pragmatic; Leech; Grice.

1.0. Introduction

Communication is one of the simplest functions regarding a language which establishes when the people want to convey their meanings that are behind their intentions. Without a language, it is almost impossible to be connected with others and be the significant part of a conversation towards ordering to communicate referring to the particular situation. It is the study of pragmatics and linguoculturology that is highly topical under the conditions of today's intercultural world society. Both directions are concerned towards meaning making and its elaboration. The field of pragmatics deals with study of form and its user, that uses the given forms into different orders for involving within conversational field. In pragmatics, the people are engaging themselves to understand the given intended meaning, along with their different goals, purpose and the action of the speaker. The following study involves the interpretation of the people in general form about what they usually mean in a particular context and the way they influence within a given context. This all is possible with course of communication between utterer and its speaker. Consequently, it is said that pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning and linguistic-cultural aspect here is of high importance.

Successful communication is not possible without reading and listening between the lines. Speakers rarely provide fully explicit description of what they mean and the hearers usually have to fill in the missing information. It is often the case that the intended message does not equal the literal meaning of the words used. What knowledge and clues do we use to

make the distinction? What thinking processes do we use as we interpret what we hear? What are the rules that govern how language is interpreted and what are the implications for the learning and teaching of English as a foreign language?

The part of general linguistics that deals with the implicit meaning and presumptive reasoning is called pragmatics. Historically, pragmatic theories originated with the philosophical work of C.S. Peirce and R. Carnap, and were further developed by Paul Grice. Pragmatics started as one of the three divisions of semiotics (the study of sign systems): syntax, which investigates the relation of signs to signs, semantics, which investigates the relation of signs to the things referred to, and pragmatics, which studies the relation of signs to their users. Because of its wide subject manner, modern pragmatics has become an interdisciplinary field of study, interacting with philosophy, psychology and sociology of language. Topics in pragmatics such as the background knowledge and attitudes of the conversational participants, the context of the conversation, and conversational rules that can be used and misused to inform, persuade, imply, etc. will be discussed in this paper. The discussion will conclude with a short overview of the role of textbooks and teachers themselves in helping foreign students' acquire pragmatic competence.

2.0. Defining Terms

Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics and semiotics that studies the ways in which context contributes to meaning. Pragmatics encompasses speech act theory, conversational implicature, talk in interaction and other approaches to language behavior in philosophy, sociology, linguistics and anthropology. Unlike semantics, which examines meaning that is conventional or "coded" in a given language, pragmatics studies how the transmission of meaning depends not only on structural and linguistic knowledge (grammar, lexicon, etc.) of the speaker and listener but also on the context of the utterance, any pre-existing knowledge about those involved, the inferred intent of the speaker, and other factors. In that respect, pragmatics explains how language users are able to overcome apparent ambiguity since meaning relies on the manner, place, time, etc. of an utterance. The ability to understand another speaker's intended meaning is called pragmatic competence.

According to the Crystal (1987:62-5); Pragmatics deals with the factors that manages the language for what we want to choose within the pool of language that could satisfy whenever it is used within a social interaction and its effects on others. Therefore, the factors of pragmatics that effect on our selection of grammatical construction are as sound pattern, and the meaning which we are producing by presenting the vocabularies through the intended procedure as a way to communicate (Crystal, 1987:62-5). Therefore, the study of pragmatics is tending to relate it with the meaning of words that people used within their social situations and choice of the words in a context.

According to the Robin; the field of pragmatics is understood as meaning concerned phenomenon that involves around the different factors of speech situation, (1964:23).

Leech (1983:13-4), pointed that the pragmatics is a study of meaning and the way to relate that speech with any provided situations, along with an aspect to make a speech in a situation and further it paves a path to determine a core principle that whether it deals with semantic or the pragmatic phenomenon. The more important aspects of pragmatics have indicated that it is the study of meaning that is related towards speech making situation.

Many pragmaticists (e.g. Grice, 1989; Leech, 1983; Gu, 1990) have argued that people's use of language is influenced by pragmatic maxims. Grice, for example, proposes the Cooperative Principle and argues that there are four conversational maxims for effecting it. Grice's fundamental point was not that people always observe these maxims, but rather that they are unstated assumptions that underlie communication. So if a speaker clearly flouts one of the maxims (e.g. by giving a very brief answer when a more informative one is expected), the speaker may be prompting the listener to look for a meaning that is different from (or additional to) the meaning that is verbally expressed; in other words, to work out the conversational implicature.

Leech (1983) argues that there is a Politeness Principle that works in conjunction with the Co-operative Principle, and identifies six associated politeness maxims. Gu (1990) also proposes a set of politeness maxims in order to account for 'polite' language use in Chinese.

According to Grice (1989), the Co-operative Principle and its associated maxims are universal principles of language use (although people such as Gazdar (1979) have challenged this claim and argued that they are subject to cultural variation). In contrast, Leech (1983) and Gu (1990) maintain that their politeness maxims have different weightings in different societies. So in cross-cultural pragmatic studies, the politeness maxims have been a rich explanatory source. For example, Chen (1993) found the politeness maxims very useful for explaining the compliment response patterns of Chinese and English speakers. However, a number of authors have criticised Leech's (1983) politeness maxims for several reasons.

Firstly, as Brown and Levinson (1987), Fraser (1990) and Thomas (1995) all point out, in the current formulation, there is no motivated way of restricting the number of maxims. Clearly, it is unacceptable for new maxims to be invented every time new regularities are noticed in 'polite' language use.

Secondly, Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that the politeness maxims function at a more superficial, less fundamental level than the cooperative maxims, and are therefore more easily undermined than the co-operative maxims.

Thirdly, as Spencer-Oatey (2000) argues, the politeness maxims all seem to have 'universal valences'; in other words, one pole of a given dimension is always taken as being more desirable than the other. For example, with regard to modesty – pride, Leech implies 'the more modest the better', and with regard to agreement – disagreement, he implies 'the more agreement the better'. Yet in different cultures, and in different speech contexts within the same culture, we contend that different options or points on the continuum could be favoured. Which point on the scale is 'optimum' depends partly on pragmatic contextual variables and partly on culturally-based sociopragmatic preferences. We propose, therefore, that the notion of politeness maxims should be reconceptualised as SIPs.

In both formal and informal speech, native speakers constantly use various tools and play on words to achieve different communicative effects. For example, an expression such as "Boy, this test was too easy!" when used after an especially challenging exam, conveys sarcasm. It is intended to mean the opposite of what it literally says. Language strategies such as this are not naturally apparent to L2 learners; they are something to be acquired beyond the knowledge of correct grammar and proper sounds. Knowledge of the culture, including personal biases, stereotypes, and transfer of what is normal in our native culture, seem to guide the way in which we interpret what we hear. Such factors as beliefs and attitudes that we keep stored in our minds about what people are typically like and how they behave, are crucial when decisions are made in potentially ambiguous sentences. For example, unless one is familiar with educational conventions in the US, a friendly reminder from an academic advisor, 'You cannot start writing your thesis too early!' could be misinterpreted as 'You should not start writing your thesis early'. Such pragmatic mistake would have very undesirable consequences for the student.

Besides beliefs and attitudes, another major topic in pragmatics is presupposition, which is an assumption in a sentence that does not need to be explicitly stated. The meaning of the sentence is implied because the background information is already known or given by the use of a particular word or sentence structure. For example, "How did he do on the test?" presupposes that you and I both know this person and that he has recently taken a test. An answer to this question can simply be "He passed," instead of repeating the information that was already implied by the earlier question.

Meaning can also be implied by the setting of when and where the sentence was uttered. English language, as all other languages, has word forms of which the interpretation depends on the physical location of the speaker and the hearer. For example, here and there, this and that, before and after, would be impossible to interpret correctly unless we are aware of their contextual information. Context often determines the meaning of otherwise identical sentences. For example, in these two situations, the sentence "What do you think?" expresses either a genuine question, or an exclamation that does not require a response.

(Context 1) One student to another: "I expect the test to be very difficult. What do you think?"

(Context 2) Student A to student B: "So, how did you do on the test?"

Student B, looking disappointed: "What do you think?"

If there is nothing unusual about the environment or the point in time, a discourse and discourse topic are other common sources of contextual information. Discourse is a series of utterances that are connected together during a conversation, a lecture or some other speech act. Speakers and hearers usually use linguistic clues, such as determiners the/a, to distinguish between previously given and new information. In general, 'new' information includes people, objects and ideas that are mentioned for the first time and they become 'given' if they are referred to again. This contrast influences interpretation of statements, for example, the two sentences Essay questions will be part of the test. and The essay questions will be part of the test. In the first sentence, the student should expect essay questions about unspecified topics and in the second sentence, certain specific, previously discussed, essay questions will be included and the student knows what to prepare for. Discourse topic is a term that describes what the sentence or conversation is about. As sentences progress, speakers use different tools to mark a change of topic to avoid misinterpretation. In English, there is a strong tendency to use active sentences and it is assumed that the subject phrase is the topic.

3.0. Sociopragmatic Interactional Principles (SIPs)

Our proposed notion of SIPs is a development of Leech's (1983) notion of politeness maxims and Kim's (1994) work on conversational/interactive constraints. Kim, Sharkey and Singelis (1994: 119) define interactive constraints as follows: 'fundamental concerns regarding the manner in which a message is constructed. They tend to affect the general character

of every conversation one engages in, and an individual's conversational style in general.' We prefer the term 'principle' to 'constraint', as constraint implies a limiting or restricting function, while principle is more neutral, and implies simply guidance or influence. Moreover, principle is associated with values and/or beliefs. So we define and explain SIPs as: socioculturally-based principles, scalar in nature, that guide or influence people's productive and interpretive use of language. The principles are typically value linked, so that in a given culture and/or situational context, there are norms or preferences regarding the implementation of the principles, and any failure to implement the principles as expected may result in mild to strong evaluative judgements. Preferences for different points on the scale will develop through the socialization process and through exposure to (and involvement in) natural interactions, and these preferences will frequently vary from context to context and from culture to culture. In other words, a key difference between maxims and SIPs is that for maxims, one end of a dimension is typically 'more desirable' (e.g. agreement is said to be more desirable than disagreement), whereas for interactional principles, different points on the scale may be preferred in different circumstances. This scalar feature of SIPs fits in with the notion of dimensions of cultural differences suggested by House (2000) and with the cultural values proposed by Wierzbicka (1985). In line with Watts (1989) and Spencer-Oatey (2002), we maintain that SIPs help manage (and hence are not alternatives to) people's face/rapport management concerns.

People's face needs and interactional rights and obligations need to be appropriately balanced relative to their task needs, and so societies develop norms and preferences for achieving this. So we contend that the notion of SIPs can help integrate the three main politeness perspectives identified by Fraser (1990): the conversational-maxim view, the face saving view, and the conversational-contract view. (See section 6 for a further discussion of this claim.)

4.0. Grice's Theory of Maxims

H. P. Grice (b. 1913), formerly a Fellow of St. John's College, Oxford, now teaches philosophy of language at the University of California, Berkeley. Two aspects of Grice's work are particularly relevant to literary interpretation: his theory of nonnatural meaning, and his theory of conversational implicature.

In a series of influential and controversial papers (Grice 1957, 1968, 1969), Grice has argued that the meaning of a word (or nonnatural sign) in general is a derivative function of what speakers mean by that word in individual instances of uttering it. That is, the universal "type" meaning, or set of such meanings, for a given word is an abstraction from the "token" meanings that speakers mean for the word in specific instances of use.

In the second lecture, Grice (1975a, 1975b) proposes that participants in conversation understand the following general "Cooperative Principle" (abbreviated CP) to be in force: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

Considering background beliefs, presupposition, context and other pragmatic conventions in discourse have led linguists to develop theories about general conversational rules that lie behind every interaction and interpretation. Paul Grice was the first to introduce the concept of maxims, or expectations that we bring into our conversational behavior. Grice based his argument on the fact that there must be certain agreed cooperation between the conversational participants for communication to be successful. This Cooperative Principle, or recognition of appropriate contribution and common purpose in a discourse, can be summarized in four individual maxims: Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Manner. This superordinate principle comprises the following subordinate rules or "maxims":

I. Maxims of Quantity: 1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange). [Note: this is the strongest-statement-possible principle first proposed in Grice (1961), and cited above.] 2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

II. Maxims of Quality: Supermaxim: Try to make your contribution one that is true. 1. Do not say what you believe to be false. 2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence

III. Maxim of Relation: Be relevant.

IV. Maxims of Manner: Supermaxim: Be perspicuous. 1. Avoid obscurity /of expression. 2. Avoid ambiguity. 3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity). 4. Be orderly.

Because conversation is a cooperative and social enterprise, children are instilled with these imperatives as part of the process of socialization and language acquisition. Grice would argue further that observing the CP and maxims is "reasonable (rational)" behavior, because it tends to benefit the speaker's interest. In any case, the ability to realize these imperatives is an important part of a speaker's communicative competence (Bates 1976). The result is that a violation of any of these maxims will be linguistically aberrant, or "marked," and literally "remarkable." (Once the violation is detected, that is; some violations are surreptitious.)

Faced with a speaker's violation of a maxim, a competent hearer will draw one of several possible conclusions, depending on the particular case:

A. The speaker is openly "opting out" from the operation of the maxim and the CP. A famous case is Gordon Liddy's persistent violation of the first maxim of Quantity, and repudiation of the CP along with it.

B. The speaker is deliberately and secretly subverting the maxim and the CP, for some usually selfish end Lying (covertly violating the first maxim of Quality) is one example of this.

C. The speaker means to observe the CP, but fails to fulfill a particular maxim through ineptitude. For example, he may ineptly use words too technical for the audience and occasion, inadvertently violating the first maxim of Manner. (Grice alludes to this general kind of violation only in passing.)

D. The speaker presumably means to observe the CP, and yet he obviously is violating a maxim; if he is not inept, he must mean something additional to what he is merely saying. For example, when asked what she thinks of a new restaurant, a woman who replied, "They have handsome carpets," would appear to be flouting the first maxim of Quantity. If there is no reason in her case (unlike Gordon Liddy's) to doubt that she means to be observing the CP and is capable of doing so, then her remark must mean something other than what it literally asserts--such as, for example, that the food there is at best mediocre.

E. The speaker presumably means to observe the CP, and yet he obviously fails to fulfill a maxim. Perhaps he could not fulfill both it and another maxim as well; that is, perhaps there is a "clash" of maxims in these particular circumstances. Thus the speaker of (2) fails to fulfil the first maxim of Quantity, because to do so (i.e., to say which city Rudy is in) would, under the circumstances of his not knowing which, infringe the second maxim of Quality. So the speaker of (2), by violating one maxim, invokes another, and implies thereby that he lacks "adequate evidence" to say which city Rudy is in. (A few words about terminology: Grice indifferently uses the term "violate" to characterize, in particular, the activity described in B above, and also, in general, any failure to fulfill a maxim [Grice 1975a: 49-52]; I use it in the latter sense throughout. And the notion of "invoking" the CP or a maxim is implicit in Grice, but the term is not his.)

These last two kinds of maxim-violation, which convey an unstated but meant meaning, are two kinds of what Grice calls "conversational implicature." By judiciously relying on the CP and maxims in such ways, speakers often succeed in communicating, by "implicating," more than what they say.

As in D, some implicatures flout a maxim so as to invoke the CP as a ground of interpretation. It is also possible to flout a maxim on the literal level (what is said) so as to invoke the same maxim at a figurative level (what is implicated). Grice (1975a: 49, 52) joins these two maneuvers in one general kind: each "exploits" a maxim. Irony and metaphor are two standard forms of maxim-exploiting implicature.

As in E, some implicatures flout a maxim so as to invoke another maxim as a ground of interpretation. There is a third general kind of implicature, which involves no maxim-violation at all, but simply invokes a maxim as a ground of interpretation. Thus if you say "I am out of gas," and I say "There is a gas station around the corner," my saying so implicates, by invoking the maxim of Relation, that I think it possible (at least) that the station is open and has gas to sell.

Besides these three kinds of "conversational implicature," Grice identifies a category of "conventional implicature," independent of the CP and its associated maxims; see Grice (1975a: 45), Kempson (1975: 145), and Katz (1972: 445-46) for discussions of this notion. He also distinguishes conversational implicatures that depend heavily on context or occasion ("particularized conversational implicatures") from those that do not ("generalized conversational implicatures"). The examples in D and E, respectively, happen to differ in this regard--though not because one turns on a clash, and the other on an exploitation.

The four conversational maxims serve as guidelines in any normal interaction and their application ensures that the speaker can convey a message and the hearer can interpret it. The maxim of Quantity states that a person's contribution should not be less or more informative than appropriate for the situation. For example, in North America, a common informal question of "What's new?" is not expected to be answered with details of your personal life. The maxim of Quantity would ask for a short and simple answer but also informative enough to not seem dismissive. The maxim of Quality states that a person should not give false information or statements which cannot be based on adequate evidence, without clearly admitting so. However distrustful we have become in our modern society, we can still function only if we assume that people around us generally do not lie. The following maxim is the maxim of Relevance, which states that whatever is said needs to follow the context and the topic of the conversation. For example, if one's answer to the above question was, "The ABC TV channel hired a new news anchor", would be considered less than cooperative because it is not related to the implied topic of the question – the person's news in personal life. Finally, the maxim of Manner requires that our contribution is orderly and not obscure or ambiguous. A naturally flowing discourse involves the understanding

and correctly applying all four conversational maxims. An example of an informative, true, relevant and clear answer to the above question would be, "Nothing much, I have been busy with classes."

There are different responses in regard to the Gricean maxims. Both sides in a conversation can choose to (1) observe them, (2) violate them – resulting in a misunderstanding, (3) opt out of them and make it clear they are doing so, (4) be unable to fulfill them and (5) exploit them and thus indicate their unwillingness to cooperate. A common occurrence in normal speech is when two maxims are in conflict. For example, small talk often does not allow us to adhere to both the maxims of quality and relevance and we choose to say something that is not completely truthful but is necessary to be polite and avoid hurt feelings. Under some circumstances and if a particular effect (irony, sarcasm) is desired, speakers can intentionally break a maxim and in such cases, even the failure to follow the code can in itself carry some meaning, called implicature. This can be very challenging to L2 learners because the listener is then required to make an interpretation on the assumed shared cultural knowledge. For example, Student A: Do you want to grab dinner on Tuesday? Student B: I have a huge test the next day. In this case, student B obviously opted out of the maxim of Relevance, that is, did not give a direct response as a yes or no. However, student A still accepts the answer as cooperative and makes the connection that the student B cannot go to dinner because he or she has to study for the test.

It has been argued that the four conversational maxims developed by Grice may not apply equally in all languages as they do in English. In his linguistic research, Keenan noted that speakers in a native community in Madagascar make conversational contributions intentionally less informative than seemingly required. The reasoning behind this interesting observation has to do with their tendency to protect information, imbedded by a history of foreign invasions. This example shows that the expectations of cooperation vary in degrees relative to culture.

Grice (1975: 49-50) outlines the general line of reasoning by which the hearer should be able to recover the "implicatum" (thing implicated) in any given case of conversational implicature. Evidently the conversational implicatum will be determinate (determined by the intentions of the speaker) in every case. But Grice acknowledges in passing (p. 58) that in some cases the hearer may be unable to rule out one or more possible interpretations; in that sense a particular implicatum may be indeterminate.

Grice's theory of conversational implicature has been variously attacked, defended, and revised by others. Keenan (1974), citing anthropological data, claims that Grice's conversational maxims are parochial, not universal; P. Brown and Levinson (1978: 298-99) argue to the contrary. Gordon and G. Lakoff (1971) try to formalize Grice' s theory so as to fit it within a generative-semantics grammar. R. Lakoff (1973, 1975, 1977) and P. Brown and Levinson (1978) would place it within a larger model of sociolinguistic "politeness."

The implications of Grice's model for literary and rhetorical theory have only begun to be explored. At the most basic level, Griffin (1977) notes that many reading-impaired children and adults have trouble reading because they fail to recognize conversational implicatures on the printed page as readily as they would if the words were spoken. That is, they can read the words, but not between the lines. No doubt the same thing can happen to more sophisticated readers of more sophisticated texts. Although Pratt (1977) does not specifically discuss failing to grasp a literary implicature, she does apply Grice's basic two-person model to the four-person structure of reported speech or fiction (author, reported or fictional speaker, reported or fictional hearer, reader), and explores the many ways in which the author of a literary text can implicate meanings through what he has his characters say. Hancher (1977: 1095-96) makes the further suggestion that much omniscient narration, by flouting the second maxim of Quality, implicates that the narrative is fictional.

As regards rhetoric, Grice himself notes that exploitative implicatures involve "something of the nature of a figure of speech." His own analysis of metaphor (1975a: 53) could use elaboration. R. Brown (forthcoming) provides such a full-dress analysis of irony.

Cooper (1977) proposes that the occurrence of conversational implicature is a variable feature of literary style, which can distinguish one literary genre from another, and one literary work from another. She also relates the playwright's device of dialogic plot-exposition to Grice's second maxim of Quantity, which it usually violates.

Finally, van Dijk (1976: 44-49) would define "literature" itself as discourse that systematically subverts Grice's Cooperative Principle and all its maxims.

5.0. Cultural-pragmatic Features of Aphorisms

Aphorism is a statement of truth or opinion expressed in a concise and witty manner. The term is often applied to philosophical, moral, and literary principles. To qualify as an aphorism, it is necessary for a statement to contain a truth revealed in a terse manner. Aphoristic statements are quoted in writings, as well as in our daily speech. The fact that they contain a truth gives them a universal acceptance. Scores of philosophers, politicians, writers, artists, sportsmen, and other individuals are remembered for their famous aphoristic statements. Aphorisms often come with a pinch of humor, which

makes them more appealing to the masses. Proverbs, maxims, adages, and clichés are different forms of aphoristic statements that gain prevalence from generation to generation and frequently appear in our day-to-day speech. Common aphorism examples are: Youth is a blunder; Manhood a struggle; Old age regret. [Benjamin Disraeli]; Pride goes before a fall. [Proverb]; The man who removes a mountain begins by carrying away small stones. [William Faulkner]; Life's tragedy is that we get old too soon and wise too late. [Benjamin Franklin]; Yesterday is but today's memory, and tomorrow is today's dream. [Khalil Gibran]; The simplest questions are the hardest to answer. [Northrop Frye]; Even a proverb is no proverb until your life has illustrated it. [John Keats]; Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind. [Rudyard Kipling] etc.

Aphorisms are considered as unique phenomena of communication. The definition of the aphorism, which is understood as a kind of small-format text that is characteristic of communication act. It is focused on the distinction between simple phrases and aphorisms. It is specified that the distinctive features of aphorisms are due to their interrelation with the cultural and value spheres of a man, and, as a consequence, its national marking, speed and quantity of its appearance, which indicates both the temporary nature of this genre form and the dynamic of its life cycle.

It has been found that aphorism of communication act is created without a linguistic context, but always functions as part of cultural, social and individual contexts. Aphorism, which is created, perceived and widespread by people, reflects their views and mentality, and can be regarded as an expression of that part of the philosophical system that is always bound to the individual value system of man.

As already mentioned in the above discussion, making use of aphorisms allows a writer to teach a philosophical or moral truth. The revealed truths prove relevant to human experiences of real life. Therefore, readers relate the piece of literature to real life, and become more fascinated and vigilant in their reading. Moreover, as truths are universal, revealing general truths in literature adds to their universal commendation. Motivational speeches quote aphorisms from such sources to inspire motivation among individuals.

6.0. Conclusion

Linguistics is an organizing methodological principle of exposure to cultural wealth. Due to linguistics there takes place a national "division" of reality into "segments". A person builds a "world picture" under the influence of linguistics, its system and units. Awareness of a complex approach to culture and linguistic units formed a linguoculturological paradigm, conditioning their interaction in the function and reflecting this process as an integral unit structure in unity of their linguistic and cultural content through the systematic methods and with a focus on a new value system.

The rapid development of this paradigm is explained by a new perception of the cultural phenomenon as the system of signs, concentrating the necessary information for society and serving as a means for obtaining it. Within the frame of linguoculturological studies the analysis of human communication patterns and ways of information materialization is undertaken, i. e. its fixation, storage and exchange by members of society. Such outreach led to creation of scientific discipline named linguoculturology, which is an integrative sphere of scientific knowledge, studying the manifestations of culture and means of its interpretation. Linguoculturology that emerged at the crossroads of cultural studies, linguistic and cultural studies, ethnolinguistics and sociolinguistics, interacts with them and has its own integrative aspect of studying the problem of language and culture. It sets the aim of systematic presentation of language and culture units in their correlation, works at a deep level of semantics, taking into account systematic and integrative approaches to these phenomena. Correlating values of culturally determined units with concepts of national culture, linguoculturological analysis provides them with deep and volume explication. Along with maxims, one of the time-proven cultural information source is aphorisms. They concentrate on life experience, value system, portraying the nationality: An Englishman's house is his castle; A constant guest is never welcome.

In this paper the authors analyzed maxims and aphorisms in the English language as those language units that bear considerably national and cultural signs. The cultural information put in these word combinations trace their origin to specific discourse or refer to person's dependence on behavior and circumstances.

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