

# A Comprehensive Look at Korean Language Functions and Discourse Competence in the Works by Nikolai Spafariia and Lorenz Lang<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

Jakobson's model of the functions of language distinguishes six elements, or factors of communication, that are necessary for communication to occur: (1) context, (2) addresser (sender), (3) addressee (receiver), (4) contact, (5) common code and (6) message. To fulfill, this study tried to have a comprehensive look at Korean language functions and discourse competence in the works of Nikolai Spafariia and Lorenz Lang. Studying Korea in Russia has a long and meaningful history, which began in the XVII century and continued to develop intensively already from the end of the XIX century. The first complete and realistic description of the Korean state was given by the Russian traveler and ambassador to China - Nikolai Spafariia. The data collected by N. Spafariia and the works provided to Russian society, in particular, the chapters providing sufficiently complete information about a hitherto little-known country - Korea, were the first works that told about the history, economy, and culture of this country. As well as N. Spafariia, L. Lang made a great contribution to collecting information about the Korean state, in particular about trade. Until the end of the XVIII century, detailed information about Korean trade collected by L. Lang was a reliable source both for Russian and for Western European researchers.

**Keywords:** Language Functions; Discourse Competence; Korea Language; Jakobson's Model.

## 1. Introduction

The role of ESL (English as a second Language) in bilingual education has always been the topic of discussion and intense research since the 1960s. Competence-based education has become a widely accepted approach to adult ESL learning. Interest in communicative language teaching has grown and spread since

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1960s. Communication is the main aim of language teaching. At the same time, communication has been seen as the instrument, the method or the way of teaching. Communicative language teaching, whose major objective is to enable learners to produce language for the purpose of performing tasks which are important or essential to their everyday existence.

Dell Hymes, an American socio-linguist, coined the term communicative competence (1972), in contrast to Noam Chomsky's linguistic competence (1965). With the publication of 'Syntactic Structures' (1957), Noam Chomsky developed the concept of "transformational generative grammar" which had departed from the psychological theory of behaviorism (Skinner's Verbal Behaviour' 1957) and structuralism (Bloomfield, 1933) and established the importance of cognition in human language learning. He asserted that every speaker of a language has an internalized generative grammar, and a native speaker-listener generates new sentences and distinguishes between correct and incorrect sentences (Etemadfar, Namaziandost, & Banari, 2019).

According to Hymes (1972), communicative competence is the ability to communicate in everyday situations and includes both structural and functional aspects of language. It includes knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, rules of speaking and responding and use of language appropriately in different social contexts. For example: "Open the door"- is an imperative sentence grammatically but functionally, it may be a request, an order, a disagreement or an agreement. Thus, the sentence may function differently in different social contexts though its structure is stable.

Widdowson (1978) makes a distinction between language use and usage. Usage is the perfection of linguistic system whereas use is the realization of the language system as meaningful spoken behavior. Thus, a speaker's competence includes knowing how to recognize and how to use sentences to respond to rhetorical acts, e.g., requesting, apologizing, greeting, defining, classifying, promising, warning, etc. Widdowson further adds, "...perhaps the only area of characterizing different language registers is to discover what rhetorical acts are commonly performed in them, how they combine to form composite communication units and what linguistic devices are used to indicate them." (1971a, p. 85) Some researchers claim that the distinction between usage and use is similar to Saussure's distinction between langue and parole, and Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance

Discourse competence is a component of communicative competence. Communicative competence is divided into four components: grammatical competence, discourse competence, socio-linguistic competence and strategic competence according to the classification of communicative competence as given by Canale and Swain (1980). They define discourse competence as an ability to make larger patterns of stretches of discourse into meaningful wholes. Later interpretation of discourse competence implies that discourse competence is also concerned with

language use in social context, and in particular with interaction and dialogue between speakers (Gumperz, 1977; Neisi, Nasri, Akbari, & Namziandost, 2019). Contrary to it, Canale and Swain (1980) place it as a separate component of communicative competence.

Revising the history of Russian-Korean relations in the last years of the XIX century allows us to trace the main stages of the process of a gradual increase in the role and place of Korea in Russia's foreign policy in the Far East, the activities of Russian diplomats in neutralizing the policies of aggressive powers in Korea and maintaining the independence of the Korean state.

Studying Korea in Russia has a long and meaningful history, which began in the XVII century and continued to develop intensively already from the end of the XIX century. After Korea got rid of the Japanese colonial yoke (1945), due to the Stalinist repressions (1930) and the government's policy of forcibly deporting Koreans (1937), the Korean studies had to be revived again in the Soviet Union. The re-creation of Korean studies in the USSR is associated with the names of such scientific researchers as M.N. Pak, F.I. Shabshina, G.F. Kim, G.D. Tiagai, A.A. Kholodovich, and others. Thanks to such specialists and their students, many books and works have seen the light, and translations of Korean literary works into Russian have been made. The development and growth of Korean studies in Russia are evidenced by the fact that Korean studies distinguish such independent sections as history, economics, politics, literature, linguistics, etc.

Prior to the establishment of diplomatic and official trade relations, Russia carried out its interest in the Korean state through Sinology. The first information about the existence of the Korean state was available to Russians already in the XIII century. This is evidenced in the works by a European traveler, as well as the first European who visited the Mongol Empire - Giovanni Plano Carpini. Despite the fact that the Korean state since the middle of the XVII century was in vassal dependence on the Qing dynasty that ruled in China, which pursued a policy of isolation from external contacts but information about Korea still penetrated into Russia. Since the second half of the XVII century, the first trade relations between the Russians and Koreans arose. These trade relations were informal.

A language function refers to what students do with language as they engage with content and interact with others. Functions represent the active use of language for a specific purpose. Students use language functions in order to express ideas, communicate with others, and show understanding of content in an academic setting (Namaziandost, Shatalebi, & Nasri, 2019).

Language is a multipurpose tool which performs the function of letting other people know our thoughts, ideas, emotions, feelings and so on in different ways. There are three major functions of language. Informative, expressive and the directive are the major functions of language which interact with personality, society and culture (Namaziandost, Sabzevari, & Hashemifardnia, 2018).

One of the basic functions of language is to communicate information of all kinds whether it is true or false correct or incorrect, important or unimportant, general or particular. All informative discourse is used to describe the world around us and to reason about it. Thus, the language which includes propaganda of all kinds and even deliberate information is said to be informative in function (Namaziandost, Neisi, Kheryadi, & Nasri, 2019).

As science gives us the informative function similarly, the poetry provides us the finest examples of expressive function of language. Every poet expresses his own feelings and thoughts, ideas, emotions and the experiments and experiences of life. Not only the poets use the expressive language, but also the other people express their deep and tender feelings and emotions. Poetry also gives a little bit informative function of language, but we must keep it into our mind that poet's purpose is to express his ideas, feelings, and emotions and to convey all these things into readers' mind. Thus, all expressive language may be analyzed into two component elements, to express the feelings and attitude of the speaker; and to evoke the same attitude or feelings in the hearer.

The third basic function of language is called "Directive Function". Directive language is based on commands and requests. For instance, if any person says something to another person for doing and thing, as a mother says her child to say prayers before going to bed, it does not mean that mother is giving information to her child or she wants to arouse something in child's mind; but the purpose of her language is to make the child do what is indicated; similarly, if we ask the question from anybody, there is an implied request for an answer. Commands and requests can be interchanged. Commands can be changed by adding a "Please" at the beginning or by the suitable change in the tone of the voice or in the expression of the face.

## **2. Methods**

This study used the following methods:

- 1) analysis of research literature on the topic;
- 2) the method of specific situations (case method) in the analysis of examples;
- 3) instrumental observation;

In addition, the study used such general scientific methods as analysis and synthesis in determining the goals, resources, and tools of the concept under consideration, as well as a structural approach.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

When relations between functions are studied, most analyses are limited to establishing a hierarchy. We would like to go a step beyond that. Let us posit that two kinds of correlations can be shown to exist between two functions. The correlation is said to be converse, or direct, if (1) an intensification of one of the two functions is accompanied by an intensification of the other and (2) a decline in one function causes

a decline in the other. The correlation is said to be inverse if an intensification of one of the two functions is accompanied by a decline in the other, and vice versa.

We will sketch out a brief analysis of this type below. Generally speaking, when one function is accentuated, it tends to diminish the importance of all the others, and the opposite happens when the function is deemphasized. But we will also postulate that some functions are generally paired in an even more definite inverse relation. The most obvious pairings are the expressive and conative functions and the referential and poetic functions.

The functions (and the factors) do not necessarily all operate on the same analytical level. The poetic function in particular can operate at least partially on a second level, as the beneficiary of certain transformations in the functional balance, especially if they are marked (Klinkenberg, 1996, p. 58). In this case, the poetic function is linked to the other functions by a non-symmetrical relation. We will call it the ascending correlation: The poetic function is intensified as a result of a significant and selective strengthening or weakening of any other language function, but the reverse is not necessarily true (e.g., the emotive function is not necessarily strengthened by intensifying the poetic function). It is hard to imagine that a marked emphasis or attenuation in one function would not draw attention to the message itself, at least in some cases. This is what happens when the phatic function breaks down in Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano*, developing into parallel monologues as opposed to real dialogues. This contributes to the poetic effect of the play. It remains to be seen whether all variations in the poetic function necessarily result from a change, either qualitative or quantitative, in one or more other functions. Moreover, the poetic function is not necessarily the only one affected in cause-and-effect relations with one or more other functions. For example, when the poetic function is suddenly accentuated, the result and/or effect may be to keep the addressee's attention at a time when it was beginning to wander (the phatic function).

The works by Russian oriental historians contain an opinion that in the XVII century Russians were the first Europeans to establish relations and trade contacts with the Korean state (Beloglasov, 2015; Penkovtsev, & Shibanova, 2015; Zinoviev, 2013). This opinion is based on the information that N. Khristizini (Krisnitsa) left, who was a member of the L. Izmailov Embassy in the Qing Empire. Later, the data left by N. Krisnitsa were specified by the Serbian merchant, who headed the Russian embassy in China in 1727 - S. Vladislavich-Raguzinskii. When mentioning this issue, Russian historiographers refer to the so-called "Portfolios G.F. Miller" (Yeoh, 2018) and the work by the administrative figure and writer K. Skalkovsky - "Russian Foreign Policy and the Situation of Foreign States" (Miller). Despite the existence of the listed works, B. Pak says that searches in the Russian and Korean archives and sources are still required in order to document the fact that the Russians were really the first from Europe to have relations with the Korean state in the XVII century (Skalkovskii, 1901).

The first complete and realistic description of the "Country of Morning Freshness" was given by the Russian traveler and ambassador to China (in 1675) Nikolai Gavrilovich Milesku Spafariia (1636-1708). While in China with a diplomatic mission in 1674-1675, he collected a significant amount of material about the Far Eastern countries. The fact that the Russian government at that time did not possess reliable and complete information about Korea (Cumings, 2005) confirms the absence of mention of Korea in the "Nazaz" and "Report", which Nikolai Spafariia received as ambassador to China. The indicated documents contained information about Formosa, Japan, India, Mongolia, and about some lands located near China (Arseniev, 1900).

The aforementioned work by N. Spafariia devotes a whole chapter 57 to the description of Korea, which is called "Description of the state of Korea, which is between the county (Leoatung) and Amur and what is near", which gives information about the geographical position of Korea, its status of vassal state of the Qing dynasty, about folk customs and food. N. Spafariia confirmed the peninsular geographical position of the country, spoke about the relations of Korea with China and Japan. Also, his work contains a message about the Manchu invasions at the beginning of the XVII century. The second chapter, entitled "Description of the State of Korea, its cities and what they bear" in the book "Travel Diaries of the Russian ambassador N.G. Spafariia from Nerchinsky prison to Beijing, 1676", as well as the aforementioned first work is devoted to the description of the "Country of Morning Freshness" (Eckert & Lee, 1991). Thus, the data collected by N. Spafariia and the works provided to Russian society, in particular, the chapters providing sufficiently complete information about a hitherto little-known country - Korea, were the first works that told about the history, economy, and culture of this country. We can say that N. Spafariia was the Russian "discoverer" of the "Country of Morning Freshness".

Russian historiography, when studying the history of Russian-Korean relations, along with the aforementioned name of Nikolai Spafariy, refers to the name of Lorentz Lang. Like N. Spafariia, Lorenz Lang (1690-1752) provided the Russian society with its own information on politics, foreign relations and trade of the Korean state. In 1719-1721, L. Lang accompanied captain Lev Izmailov during his trip to China. The purpose of this trip was the resumption of interrupted Russian-Chinese trade relations. Subsequently, he became the trading agent of Russia in China. Another responsibility of Lorenz Lang was to collect information about Korea. He collected especially a lot of information regarding Korean trade. Until the end of the XVIII century, detailed information on Korean trade collected by L. Lang was a reliable source not only for the Russian but also for Western European researchers (Skalkovskii, 1901). He writes about the oppression of the Korean ambassadors in the Chinese capital. We also learn that the Korean ambassadors were strictly forbidden to meet with foreigners and constantly were under strict control. In Russia,

L. Lang's diaries were first published in 1766 as part of a Russian translation of John Bell's book, which included them in the description of his journey from Petersburg to Beijing, and in 1822 were published as "The Day Note of L. Lang's Stay, an agent of His Majesty the Emperor of Russia at the Chinese court, 1721" (The Association of Korean History Teachers, 2011). It is noteworthy that L. Lang was the first Russian who held a direct, documented dialogue with the Koreans. Despite the fact that the relations of Lorentz Lang led to the severance of Russian-Chinese relations, nevertheless, these contacts, according to the Russian historian and orientalist N. Küner, "are the embryo of the future relations of Russia with Korea" (Spafariia, 1960). After the departure of L. Lang from Beijing, the Russian-Korean dialogue continued. Russian historiography has no information preserved but we learn about the continuation of these contacts from Korean sources. T.M. Simbirtseva, in the already mentioned work "Russian-Korean contacts in Beijing at the end of the XVII–mid-XIX centuries", cites translation fragments from the diaries of Korean ambassadors (Küner, 1914).

To sum up, discourse, in the broadest sense, refers to language use in social contexts. The two main aspects of discourse competence are cohesion and coherence (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1995). Cohesion refers to using linking expressions, such as conjunctions or adverbial phrases, to connect ideas. A coherent text is one that makes sense. This concept includes clearly and logically indicating relationships, such as cause-effect and problem-solution, between ideas or events.

Discourse competence also refers to familiarity with genres (Connor & Mbaye, 2002), such as conversations, interviews and reports. In other words, a discoursally competent speaker or writer is able to arrange words, phrases and sentences to structure a text that is appropriate within a particular genre.

#### 4. Conclusions

The functions of language can be linked to the various possible enunciative agents. In a literary text, for example, these agents are as follows: the empirical (real) author, the implied author (our impression of the author from reading his text), the narrator, the character, the narratee, the implied reader and the empirical (real) reader. To take a simple example, in a disconnected interaction between characters, the disintegration of the phatic function (as when dialogue degenerates into parallel monologues) might correspond to a) symbolically, a phatic dysfunction between the empirical author and reader, and b) the poetic function being activated through the dysfunction between characters. In this case the phatic function is thematized, and it is fictional (it is operating between characters), and the poetic function is "real" (it originates from the real author and is meant to be perceived by the real reader). This thematized, fictional phatic function is thus a way of activating the poetic function in reality.

The presence/absence of the functions and their hierarchical structure can be used not only to describe units, but also classes or types of units (e.g., textual or pictorial genres). For Jakobson, what characterizes poetry and distinguishes it from other genres (literary and textual in general) is not so much the presence of the poetic function as its dominance. By identifying the functional configuration (e.g., by specifying the secondary dominant function) we can create a typology. Jakobson recognizes that epic poetry – focused on the third person, as opposed to lyric poetry (first-person) or poetry of the second person – "strongly involves the referential function of language" (Jakobson, 1960, p. 357)

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