Verbalization of communicative strategies and tactics in the speech genre of parliamentary debate (based on debates in the House of Commons on March 25, 2013)

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Abstract – The article focuses on communication between members of parliament, viewed as a strategic process. It provides a comprehensive research into lingual-and-pragmatic features of parliamentary debate as a specific genre of political discourse. The argumentative strategy is regarded as the central component of the communicative model of debate. It is implemented through a number of tactics. Communicative moves, linguistic and speech means of their realization are analyzed. The research suggests theoretical and practical perspectives and directions for future research, while the comprehensive classification of communicative strategies and tactics still does not exist.

Key words – communicative strategy, tactic, communicative move, verbalization, House of Commons, communication, parliamentary debates.

I. Introduction

Communicative strategy as a certain sequence of communicative actions, organized in accordance with the goal and situational conditions, is one of the most important parameters of pragmatic discourse interpretation. They reflect the peculiarities of communication in the sphere of social interaction. Political discourse has its own communicative strategies and tactics. All members of parliamentary debate pursue their own goal. In order to achieve it they implement different communicative strategies, tactics and moves, trying to demonstrate their strengths and identify the weaknesses of their opponents.

II. Parliamentary debate as a strategic process

Politics is an important element of a modern society, which functions in order to ensure the sustainability of the social processes by regulating the relations among people in society. The distinctive features of political communication are its publicity, unidirectionality (from communicator to recipient), unstable and heterogeneous audience [12].

Political discourse has its own set of genres. The narrowest definition of political discourse was proposed by Dutch linguist T.A. van Dijk, who believes that political discourse is a class of genres, limited by a social sphere, i. e. politics [4].

Speech genre is a standard form of expression that is based on a particular communicative situation and has communicative and pragmatic goals, which can be achieved at a certain socio-cultural grounds. Parliamentary debate is characterized by evaluative, conflictive and manipulative type of presentation and argumentative-confrontational type of communication. According to the scale of institutionality, offered by E.I. Sheihal, genres of political communication are graduated from interpersonal (private) communication to institutional (public) one, which correlates with the notion of formal / informal communication [9]. A.V. Dmytriyev, V.V. Latynov and A.T. Khlopyev believe that parliamentary debates are at the convergence of formal and informal communication, while they are addressed directly to the opponent (private communication), and their results can be obtained by mass media [5]. Parliamentary debate is a complex speech event that is characterized by inclusion of macro dialogue, where the dialogue form (the language of the debate, participation in discussion) is combined with a monologue (report, the speech of the Member of Parliament).

Discourse of parliamentary debate, as one of the genres of political discourse, is defined as "a text of public speech in the dynamics" [3] and has a number of specific characteristics. The main feature of parliamentary debate discourse is the fact that it has a collective author. It means that every communicant is involved in its performance through its own speech act.

Certain consecution and coherence of speech acts is observed in the discourse of parliamentary debate. An anterior act sets the context for evaluation of a following speech act. Another important feature of the parliamentary debate discourse is its orientation towards reaching some global aim that defines pragmatic considerations of communicants and influence them in their choice of communicative tactics, which, in their turn, define a sequence of speech acts.

Announcing something, addressee is thinking about the impact of his message, taking into account the different approaches that more or less correspond with the specific situation of communication. This allows us to consider communication in terms of overall strategy (depending on the goal) and the specific tactic (depending on its achievement). O. Issers claims that communication is a strategic process, the basis for which is the optimal choice of language resources. Strategy of verbal behavior covers the entire sphere of the communication process structure when the goal is to achieve certain results [7].

Strategy as a linguistic notion was studied by T.A. van Dijk, M. Koit and H. Yym, O.S. Issers, F.S. Batsevych, V.Z. Demyankov, E. Kluyev, T. Yanko, S.A. Sukhukh. Despite the fact that communication strategies are the subject of many linguistic studies, conventional definition still does not exist. As a result, every researcher offers his/her understanding of the phenomenon. I.N. Borysova argues that communication strategy is a way of organizing verbal behavior according to intentions of communicants. In a broad sense communicative strategy is understood as a primary task of a communicative strategy is a way of intention implementation, which involves the selection of facts in order to influence the intellectual, volitional and emotional sphere of recipient [2].

In each communicative situation, speakers use their own communicative strategies which promote the objectives of communication. In this case, the strategy is considered as a realization of the overall situation, determination of the direction of development and influence organization in order to achieve the goals of communication. The strategy is

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implemented in communicative tactics. Communicative tactics are defined as speech techniques that enable a speaker to achieve the communication goals in a specific situation. In everyday communicative situations, one verbal tactics are effective and in the business communication – another ones. Making impact on different social groups, the speaker should choose the appropriate verbal tactics, while the tactics are not universal and effective in all situations. Communicative strategies are flexible and dynamic, as they are corrected in the process of communication. They directly depend on the communicative actions of the opponent's speech and on the context of discourse, which constantly changes [8].

Communicative move is a tool for the implementation of a tactic. In order to link in a functioning model tactics and communication moves it is necessary to determine the most common operations that form the basis of tactic [7]. T.A. van Dijk defines the communicative move as functional unit of the action sequences, which promotes solving local or global task within certain strategy [4]. The optimal strategy requires that each move makes the maximal contribution to the strategic important task . Although the communicant can not predict all the stages of dialogue, the overall strategy determines what type of course he/she can make in critical points. In addition, the choice of a communicative move is based on the textual and contextual effects of previous moves. Since the preliminary information on the communicative act may be incomplete or incorrect, some moves can less successful, and then the communicant gas to use another moves in order to adjusted unintended consequences or conclusions. The functional role of every communicative move within the overall strategy, according to van Dijk, is defined in accordance with the preceding and anticipated moves.[4]. The emphasis on the relational nature makes no moves. Thus, the correction of semantic move can be determined only on the basis of what was said earlier. Some moves have no relational function, i.e. can be classified by themselves. Other moves can be both relational and autonomous.

Characteristic for the parliamentary discourse is its triadic structure of verbal interaction of its members: the Speaker, who serves as coordinator of the procedures of parliamentary debate, Member of Parliament, whose function is the regulation of the government actions and the defendant (government representative), whose main task is to report on the government work to the speaker and member of parliament during the parliamentary debate. Triadic structure of parliamentary debate is regulated by status and role relations characteristic for the institutional discourse. During the speech interactions participants of parliamentary debate establish a certain relations that can be described using the concept of "communicative status". Although, there is a close connection between social status of the individuals and the peculiarities of their verbal behavior, social and communicative status do not always coincide. Communicative status determines the rights and obligations of participants of verbal interaction and can vary. In other words, one of the communicants can take a priority position depending on the situation. In particular, the communicative status of speaker is higher than the communication status of recipient and the listener regardless of their social status [1].

Characteristic feature of parliamentary debate is its argumentative nature, ability of the politicians to defend their position on some issues. Argument is a response to some incentive. This response can become an incentive for the next response. In such way, a consecutive succession of utterances is formed [10]. All debate participants pursue certain goals, especially to demonstrate their strengths and identify the weaknesses of their opponents.

The main communicative strategy used by parliament members participating in debates is argumentative strategy. The term "political argumentation" was proposed by V.I. Kurbatov . He considers this type of argumentation to be an important element of socio-political relations and argues that the role of argumentation in substantiation of political programmes, manifestos and promotion is huge [8].

The development of a culture of politician indicates of progress of democracy in the society and becomes a necessary component of political thinking. Socio- political argumentation penetrates all spheres of public life. Connection between socio-political argumentation, ideology and promotion is implemented in the theory and practice of political relations.

Development of socio- political argumentation occurs within confrontation between two types of worldview:

1) Worldview that reflects the real interests of the people and the prospects for social development;

2) Worldview that offers ideological content of story within those relations which are beneficial to certain social groups and parties.

The process of argumentation, including the political, is based on such arguments:

- Argument of authority (based on a moral, literary and political norm);

- Causality (proves that according to the laws of determinism certain fact leads to certain consequences ;

- Historical facts and reliable data;

- Figures data ;
- Advantages and disadvantages;

- Alternative (based on the fact that it is imperative to choose one option);

- Exclusion of other solutions (demonstrates disadvantages of these decisions);

- "Levels" (shows that with some effort it is possible to achieve certain level, etc.);

- Appeal to the eternal values [6].

Arguments as the part of the principles on which the socio-political argumentation is based, can help in achieving some opportunities in the process of argumentation and contribute to the study of the phenomenon of socio- political argumentation.

So, genre of parliamentary debates is the central one within genre space of political discourse, while it has specific features and characteristics which demonstrate that parliamentary debate can be defined as a separate genre of political discourse.

III. Communicative tactics of argumentative strategy in British parliamentary debate of the House of Commons

The conducted intent-analysis revealed that in order to achieve maximal effectiveness members of parliament use the tactic of establishing contact, incentive tactic, creating informal / natural atmosphere, attracting listener's attention, forming negative situation assessment, facilitating understanding / assessment of the situation, inclusiveness and keeping distance. All these tactics are the means of implementing argumentative strategy, the aim of which is to change the opinion of addressee, to prove the truth of discussing statement and to control interlocutor's consciousness in order to make some changes in his / her worldview. Argumentation or persuasion is an integral component of communication in the sphere of politics and one of the ways of influencing human consciousness. All these intentions correspond with main strategic goal of argumentative discourse - making persuasive impact. This task is achieved by different communicative moves within certain tactics, which are required to create any argumentative text, by using reliable and convincing arguments, their consistent and logical presentation and by clear logical connection between arguments and thesis.

On the basis of research results the database of British parliamentary debate hold in the House of Commons was created. It is an efficient way of arrangement, quick search and viewing results of research. The database contains the description of each tactic of argumentative strategy and communicative moves through which the tactic is implemented, which are illustrated by the debates text and result of quantitative analysis.The most frequently used tactics of parliamentary debate are the tactic of facilitating understanding / assessment of the situation and tactics of inclusiveness.

The tactic of facilitating understanding / assessment of the situation is aimed at explaining the situation. Making communicative moves that implement this tactics, the speaker wants the listeners to achieve the right conclusions about situation. With this aim debaters use the following communicative moves.

Drawing analogy is a communicative move the aim of which is to form beneficial for the speaker associations in the mind of the audience and provide appropriate settings in its consciousness for the perception of reality:

The problem is that last week's announcement is more likely to create yet another housing bubble by driving up asset prices. Indeed, some of it might even sow the seeds that gave rise to the sub-prime mortgage problem we saw in the United States, because we are suffering from an acute lack of housing in just about every town and city in the country.

Appealing to the past events, the speaker, first of all, demonstrates his / her erudition in the certain issue. Past events are the real facts and cannot be disputed. It is a good means of facilitating understanding and assessment of the situation:

Let me remind the House—I know Government Members have a collective amnesia about this—that in 1997, when the Labour Government came to power, the national debt was 42% of GDP; after 11 years of the Labour Government and before the global recession of 2008, the ratio of GDP to national debt was 35%. That is a reduction of 11%, and it was not achieved by a Government who were financially incompetent.

The communicative move of clarifying / explaining the situation is made in order to represent the complicated

political events or phenomena as accessible and understandable, but at the same often distorting some facts, making in such way the explanation of the situation more beneficial for the speaker:

It is very simple: those who are staying here for more than a year have an impact on public services and on the UK more generally. I am pleased to say to my hon. Friend that our policy of differentiation means that we have been cutting out abuse in the student visa system, while at the same time the number of overseas students applying to our universities has gone up. We are welcoming the brightest and the best.

Demonstrating cause and effect relationship, the author makes a statement, in which he / she strives to assess the situation objectively and give a reason for that assessment:

To my mind, it was Bill Clinton and the American Administration who, wanting to encourage the less well off, especially among the Afro-Caribbean community in the United States, to buy their own homes, consequently created a sub-prime market in the 1990s. By weakening financial regulation, the US and British Governments created a new class of specialized mortgage lenders that subcontracted their liability. By failing to put up interest rates, the US Federal Reserve and the Bank of England allowed the housing market to overheat. That is the reason why we created this major crash.

In order to give own assessment of the situation and do that indirectly, the debaters use the communicative move of commenting upon the situation:

At the moment, the regulators are pulling in different directions. The MPC has pumped in £375 billion by printing electronic money in exchange for purchasing gilts from the commercial banks, but that credit is not flowing into the real economy. On the other hand, the Financial Services Authority, and its successor body the FPC, are telling the banks not to lend any of that money and to rebuild their capital position to de-leverage. Those two impulses fight against each other and it is entirely sensible for the Chancellor to say that the FPC and the MPC must co-ordinate better.

Making comparison is frequently used by debaters in order to facilitate understanding and assessment of situation, while it is important to show the difference. Everything can be objectively accessed only in comparison:

As the first Liberal Democrat speaking in this debate, I would not be doing my duty if I did not praise the Chancellor for the decision to raise the income tax threshold to £10,000. This is a long sought-after victory, which I very much welcome, which will see 2.5 million taxpayers—many of them low-paid women—taken out of tax and 20 million taxpayers getting a £700 smaller tax bill than they did under Labour.

The debaters also use concretization in order to clearly explain the situation. Besides, the concretization emphasizes the certain phrase:

I am suggesting that while people across the country especially the most vulnerable—see their household income slashed and the poorest people are having to live in more difficult circumstances, the Government see their priority as giving millionaires a tax cut and cutting taxes for the biggest businesses in the country. Very efficient communicative move is giving an example:

My young constituent, James Harrold, aged 19, from Middlewich, lost both his legs after being hit by a police car travelling at speed. In 2011-12, police vehicles were the cause of 18 deaths and many serious injuries such as those sustained by James.

Synchronizing the actions, the author draws imaginary parallel of actions that are happening simultaneously in order to dive the listeners opportunity to compare those actions and come to conclusion:

The announcement to help first-time home buyers is great, but the wording needs to be tight to prevent it from being misused as a licence for people to buy a second home or to add further to the buy-to-rent racket that has led to so much misery for those trapped in the private rented sector, while others have become property millionaires by sponging on funds from housing benefits paid for by taxpayers to help people who cannot afford to buy or who cannot get a council house.

The markers of this communicative move are the words *at the same time and while*.

In order to simplify the explanation of the statement, the debaters use consequent proving of thesis:

UKTI and the FCO have been great at targeting highgrowth nations and opening new offices, but we need to turbo-charge that expansion. We need not only to target three, four or five cities in these huge economies such as India and Indonesia, but to go into the 15 or 20 top tier 1 and tier 2 cities. In those economies it is not only the national Governments who make decisions; the state governments make many of the big decisions on investment, which is why we need to turbo-charge our approach and get these offices across these countries quickly.

The communicative act of making assumption foresees possible presupposition of causative action:

If the Government concentrated at least some effort on collecting taxes from international corporations that operate in this country, and closing some of the loopholes in the tax system, there would be more money to go around.

Usually this communicative move is verbalized by conditional sentences and has marker "*perhaps*":

Perhaps in a future Budget there will be an opportunity to look at a proper stabiliser, whereby when the price of fuel goes up, the tax comes down.

Presenting facts / figures is also very efficient communicative move. It is considered that such data are based on the real statistic researches. Therefore, the listeners have no doubt about their accuracy and believe them to be the indicator of the done work:

Let us begin by examining the facts about the Government's record. Housing starts fell by 11% last year to 98,000. The number of private homes started was down; the number of local authority homes started was down; and the number of housing association homes started was down—indeed, the figure of 19,460 was the lowest for eight years.

Reference to the source of information makes the statement more argumentative and the facts look more proved and realistic:

Official statistics from the Secretary of State's Homes and Communities Agency show that affordable housing starts collapsed in the last financial year by 68%; homelessness and rough sleeping are up by a third since the election; the number of families with children and/or a pregnant woman housed in bed-and-breakfast accommodation for six weeks or more has risen by over 800% since the coalition came together; and 125 councils have had families in bed-andbreakfast accommodation for six weeks or more.

The communicative move of reference to somebody's words the addressers makes in order to show their awareness and knowledge of content of causative situation and receive comments from the opponent about this. This communicative move can be implemented by using sentences with direct (a) or indirect language (b):

(a) As my second favourite member of the Labour party, Lord Mandelson, remarked last week: "I can't quite remember which member of the government it was who claimed to have abolished boom and bust. Well, we abolished boom;

(b) As the Prime Minister said earlier today, the Government are determined to ensure that anyone not entitled to receive free NHS services should be properly identified and charged for the use of those services.

Demonstrating support from other people / organizations, the author focuses on the interests and demands of others regarding the implementation of the causative action. Such communicative move considerable effects the listener's assessment and understanding of situation:

Those are not just my views. The International Monetary Fund concluded that "the UK experienced an increase in the deficit as result of a large loss in output/GDP caused by the global banking crisis and not even as result of the bank bailouts, fiscal stimulus and bringing forward of capital spending. It's basic economics: when output falls the deficit increases.

Another effective tactic is a tactic of inclusiveness. Investigation of the opposition "we" / "they" was touched within context of different theories (M.M. Bakhtin 1972, A.B. Penkovskyi 1989, S.L. Sakhno 1991, P. Serio 1993, T.A. van Dijk 1995, 1996, Y.M. Lotman 2000, etc.). Because of the fact that value system of society is based on a rigid dichotomy of " our – their ", which consists in axiological opposition of our positive, safe, well –known and their strange, negative, dangerous and unknown, the grouping of the variety of personalities and their properties according to conceptual opposition "our – their" facilitates implementation of speaker's intentions, contributing to clearer vision of reality.

The parliamentary debates are also based on the opposition "we – they". In order to entice the audience the debaters use tactics of positive self-presentation.

So, the tactics of inclusiveness includes tactics of positive self-presentation. They are mutually complementary, while the aim of both the tactics of positive self-presentation and tactics of inclusiveness is the same – enticing the audience. Consequently, the communicative moves by which they are implemented are also the same.

In order to show their strengths, debaters glorify their success:

We have a clear strategy, robust legislation, good-quality support for victims, and strong enforcement against offenders, both in country and at the border. We are also working closely with our international partners to tackle the problem at source.

Expressing own opinion / position serves as the prove of speaker's individuality and familiarity with the discussing issue:

I do not think, however, that the sort of measures the Chancellor has in mind and which the new Governor might announce in relation to forward guidance will do the trick and get our economy going.

This communicative move has such markers: *I believe, I am pleased, I understand, I am sure, I welcome, I think, I support, I do not think, I wish, I predict, I know, I am confident, I am disappointed, In my view, to my mind, I do not support, I am proud, I am keen on, I am delighted, I appreciate, I acknowledge, I agree, etc.*

Describing the current problem or answering a question, the debater assures audience that soon the problem will be solved. Some speakers describe the specific steps that will improve the situation. In such way they make the communicative move of transferring stress from poor facts onto good ones:

Of course more savings need to be made to pay off Labour's debt, but we are on the side of people with gumption who protect and enhance public services, so this Budget is about rewarding aspiration and boosting growth; it is about helping businesses to create jobs, and about giving a leg up to wannabe home owners.

In most cases this communicative move has markers *but*, *however*.

The debaters often suggest the ways of solving the problem in order to present themselves positively:

We called on the Chancellor to use the money raised from the 4G mobile auction to build thousands of affordable homes to stimulate the economy and tackle the housing crisis. To improve the housing stock, we recommended that VAT on home repairs, maintenance and improvements should be cut to just 5%. To help young people who want to get on to the property ladder, the CBI's proposal of a housing individual savings account should be considered. We also advocate giving first-time buyers a stamp duty holiday on properties worth up to £250,000.

As all actions of parliament are public-targeted, demonstrating care of people is very efficient communicative move:

Although we may bandy statistics across the House, we are dealing with a desperate situation—for which, by the way, I do not blame the Chancellor—and we should put at the forefront of our minds the appalling human tragedy of ordinary people who are being put out of work and who cannot find work.

The debaters demonstrate their purposefulness stating their intentions (aa) and sharing their aim (bb):

(aa) It is necessary, however, to consider continually our effectiveness in this area, and we will keep the work of the inter-departmental ministerial group under review to ensure that it is carrying out the effective work that we want it to do.

(bb) We are rolling out biometric residence permits to non-European economic area nationals in the UK granted leave for more than six months to make it easier for them to prove their entitlement to live and work. In order to prove their achievements, debaters present figures. The listeners have no doubt about their accuracy and believe them to be the indicator of the successive work:

As this is Home Office questions, I will stick to the Home Office's responsibilities, which include keeping our streets safe, which we are doing more effectively than ever before. Crime is down 10%, and it is down in the Metropolitan police area. I am sure the action the Mayor has taken today will make London's streets even safer in future.

Foreseeing positive / perspective consequences is a prediction of further course of events based on interpretation of available data. The prediction is positive, as a result of speakers' actions:

Of course more savings need to be made to pay off Labour's debt, but we are on the side of people with gumption who protect and enhance public services, so this Budget is about rewarding aspiration and boosting growth; it is about helping businesses to create jobs, and about giving a leg up to wannabe home owners.

Opposite to the tactic of inclusiveness is a tactic of keeping distance.

Like the tactics of inclusiveness includes tactics of positive self-presentation, the tactics of keeping distance includes tactics of opponent's discredit. They are also mutually complementary, while both the tactics of keeping distance and tactics of opponent's discredit have the same aim – put the audience against the opponent, demonstrating his / her weaknesses. Consequently, the communicative moves by which these tactics are implemented are also the same.

The debaters stress opponent's faults:

Rather than cutting those people's pay by 1%, putting more money in the pockets of these workers would be an excellent way to stimulate demand across the country. Instead, the Government are stifling those workers' spending ability. Furthermore, a high proportion of women in the public sector will be affected. I fear that the Government's approach will hurt working women disproportionately. It certainly does not encourage aspiration.

The members of parliament often examine negative consequences of opponent's action. They give facts and arguments that prove someone's guilt or involvement in these negative consequences:

We hear about tough new licensing laws, yet no action is taken on tackling the problem of cheap booze, often consumed at home before going out. The Government's alcohol strategy is obviously in disarray.

The most frequently used communicative move of this tactic is reproaching. In such way the speakers put themselves in the forefront and belittle the achievements of opponent:

The rules existed for 13 years under the Labour Government, who did absolutely nothing to change them. We are tackling the problem. If Labour Members had any grace, they would thank us for doing so;

"I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on his chutzpah in criticising the Government for not doing anything in two and a half years, when his Government did nothing in 13 years".

Commenting upon opponent's words is one more communicative move. It is direct or indirect refutation of opponent's statement, implying accusation of lie: The hon. Member for Reading West (Alok Sharma) said that we are doing well on exports—I am not sure whether we were more interested in exports or Reading—but compared with what was projected and with what we need the outcome in those two years has been terrible. I believe that the projected figure was 6% and we achieved minus 0.3% to December last year in the value and volume of exports.

Very often the debaters use irony / sarcasm against the opponent:

Bradford, my constituency, is an almost perfect example. Youth unemployment has tripled in two years; one in eight is unemployed; our child poverty statistics are the second worst in the country; our schools are the third worst in the country; our hospitals are the seventh worst in the country; our young people walk the shuttered-up streets without education, training or jobs; and the Government and others in the media cry surprise when the devil finds work for their idle hands.

Another communicative move used within tactics of opponent's discredit is revealing the discrepancy between words and actions:

Then there is the strange case of the remarkably reclusive infrastructure guarantee. It was launched by the Chancellor in the autumn statement. He said that he would set aside ± 10 billion for investment in housing. It sounded good and we supported it, but we now know that not a single penny of it has yet been used to support house building.

Conclusion

Thus, communicative strategy is a way of intention implementation, which involves the selection of facts in order to influence the intellectual, volitional and emotional sphere of recipient. The main communicative strategy used by British parliament members participating in debate is argumentative strategy. It is implemented through the tactic of establishing contact, incentive tactic, creating informal / natural atmosphere, attracting listener's attention, forming negative situation assessment, facilitating understanding / assessment of the situation, inclusiveness and keeping distance.

In order to analyse all these tactics and communicative moves, which are the tools for implementation of tactics, the database of British parliamentary debate hold in the House of Commons was created, what is an efficient way of arrangement, quick search and viewing results of research. According to the quantitative analysis conducted on the basis of database, the most frequently used tactics of parliamentary debate are the tactic of facilitating understanding / assessment of the situation and tactics of inclusiveness.

While modern linguopragmatics is oriented to communication research based on communicative and discursive paradigm, this research makes a significant contribution to the development of linguopragmatics. For the first time the communicative strategies and tactics are studied based on the official report of the British Parliament proceedings – Hansard, using methods of pragmalinguistics and cognitive linguistics.

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