

SOME ASPECTS OF “FACE-SAVING” IN DIALOGUE DISCOURSE

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During the last two decades human communication has become a topic of interest for language analysts. Language and environment have a significant impact on the way people communicate trying to establish good relations with each other. Language has in store various means that help communicants not only to achieve felicitous communication but also save face in the process of interpersonal communication. The article deals with language and speech means aimed at saving face in Modern English conversational discourse. It describes theoretical grounds of investigation based on the politeness theory and cooperation principles and focuses on defining and analyzing “face-saving” strategies and tactics in Modern English conversational discourse. Understanding the effect “face-saving” strategies and tactics produce will benefit interpersonal communication on different levels. Hence this subject is germane and most topical to education in general and language teaching in particular.

Keywords: “face saving” strategies, “face saving” tactics, conversational discourse, communication, positive / negative communication, communication goals, communicant, politeness theory, cooperation principle.

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Introduction

Globalization processes embrace countries with different levels of development and humanity as a whole needs common norms of societies interaction. Cultural globalization in particular necessitates common comprehensible ethical basis to promote the dialogue between nations and cultures. The need for economic and cultural cooperation is one of the objective reasons of human communication qualitative changes. Its efficiency is determined by sticking to the ethic norms of communication that are based on socio-ethical principles of language behaviour. The study of language communication in this context helps in determining various principles connected with the communication intention of the addresser, character of communicants' interaction and peculiarities of their communication.

The art of polite communication is the addresser's ability to take into consideration well in advance the addressee's features of character and mood while choosing the communication tactics, the use of appropriate lexis and efficient utterance structuring. Rules of politeness in combination with cooperation attitude assist in achieving effective communication. The participants' communication interaction takes place and their intentions to calm down, obtain information, answer a question, drive somebody mad, better self-present, etc. are realized within discourse, the most important communication category.

Both politeness and cooperation functions overlap as they govern people's social behaviour and communication activity. In the most gene-

ral sense the politeness principle can be defined as social cooperation type based on respect for partner's personality. It is considered that the above principle plays more important part in communication practice than the cooperation principle. Regarding speech communication the politeness principle is determined as special speech behaviour strategy aimed at avoiding possible conflict situations resulting from the use of different rules and tactics. G. Leech (1983) defined six rules or maxims: tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement and sympathy.

The success of verbal communication depends upon the communicators' wish and possibility to express their thoughts, the skill to determine characteristic features of the interlocutor and formulate own remarks in the best possible way under the circumstances. Polite conversation can be considered as pursuit of agreement.

The communication process is a bilateral one comprising speech production and perception. The aim of the speaker is to convey a message, while that of the listener is to adequately comprehend the information. Unsuccessful presentation as well as inadequate perception and incorrect comprehension of the information result in communication failures, possible conflict situations and the "speaker's loss of face". Following the principles of politeness and cooperation is the prerequisite of successful communication and "saving the speaker's face" when it is needed.

The *object* of the research is discourse fragments directed at communicants "face-saving" during the process of communication in the light of fiction literature.

The *aim* of the research is to define face saving strategies and tactics in Modern English discourse and to reveal their realization during communication; the *method* used is discourse analysis (Gee 1999; Селіванова 2010: 128; Сыров 2009: 222).

Politeness culture tends to "preserve/save one's own face" even in the most difficult situations for the communicators. Politeness as a communicative principle is a complex socio-

cultural phenomenon, an element of communicative consciousness of society members. This principle is based on the "politeness" concept meaning and presupposes identifying "social face" with self-respect of an individual (Brown, Levinson 1987: 77). "Face" as a concept was introduced into sociolinguistics by E. Goffman (1967), who considered "face" as positive social value that an individual lays claim to. P. Brown and S. Levinson somewhat modified E. Goffman's concept and consider "face" as a peculiar social image, every member of society being interested in saving it (Brown, Levinson 1987: 131). They differentiate between "negative face" and "positive face". During an intercourse communicants aim at saving both one's own face and that of the interlocutor. It should be noted that "face saving is not an aim, but the condition that makes normal communication possible" (Карасик 1992: 16). Any speech act may be considered as Face Threatening Act (Brown, Levinson 1987: 193), the concept "face" being understood as the interlocutor's image, his territory in a wide sense that includes not only the interlocutor's private space, her / his time and cover (body, clothes) but also her / his cognitive space.

Different speech strategies are being used in attempt to avoid potential threats.

Politeness strategy, introduced into linguistic use by P. Brown and S. Levinson (Brown, Levinson 1987: 193), differentiates between positive and negative politeness; the former being friendly attitude toward the addressee, solidarity, emphasis on group identity, pursuit of agreement and conflict avoidance, the use of speech acts aiming to raise the addressee's role/status (a compliment, gratitude, invitation, etc.), the latter being fear to seem a nuisance, to hurt the addressee, lack of emotions, restraint, avoidance of speech acts that may threaten the addressee (order, criticizing, direct questions) or some mitigation of already performed "threatening act" (e.g. by apologizing).

The authors emphasize on the connection between politeness formula and communication situation (official-unofficial) and role relations. They believe that politeness strategies are aimed at "saving the addressee's face" thus sta-

ting the necessity of maintaining conventional relations.

Modern linguists agree that the study of the politeness category is more effective if being conducted in comparison to impoliteness theory than in isolation (Brown, Levinson 1987; Leech 1983; Карасик 1992; Ларина 2003 *et al.*).

In our opinion the politeness category is a complex of linguistic indicators (patterns, set phrases) and their accord with grammatical norm. The use of politeness formula is governed by various rules: a) linguistic proper, regulating the choice of lexical means, grammatical categories and syntactic structures from among functionally similar or synonymous; b) social ones, that dictate the use of already chosen units in accordance with social roles of communicators; c) situational ones, that demonstrate total concord of speech etiquette with the communication circumstances and its atmosphere.

To be successful verbal communication has to observe several rules, the major one being called cooperative principle by H. P. Grice (Грайс 1985). According to the aim and development of conversational interaction the following four maxims are to be implemented: quality, quantity, relevance and manner.

The use of "face-saving" strategies and tactics for pragmatic communicative purposes

Communication and pragmatics-oriented linguistics is centered on discourse research (Радевич-Винницкий 2001; Серль 1986; Почепцов 1986; Ван Дейк 1989; Бацевич 2003; Селиванова 2004), analyzing both the process of communication and its participants (the addresser and the addressee), their choice of communication strategies and tactics (Исcepч 2006). Attitudinal tactics are one type of them; its analysis is far from being complete as the research in this field is scarce. Application of the theoretical-methodological apparatus elaborated by communication, cognitive and pragmatic linguistics enlarges the possibilities in the study

of evaluation tactics realization a great deal, the latter being considered as conversational turns aimed at realization intermediate communicative goals within a dialogue discourse.

Verbal communication is considered not only as an exchange of information between interlocutors but also as a dynamic verbal activity carried out under definite social and interpersonal communicators' circumstances that have a definite pragmatic purpose (in our case it's expression / apprehension of evaluation) that is realized in discourse. Discourse is understood to be a close cohesive communicative situation, formed by succession of both linguistic and extra linguistic factors. Dialogue discourse is characterized by semantic and pragmatic binding, addresser's communicative initiative and addressee's communicative responsiveness. Both the former and the latter direct and regulate the choice of adequate communicative strategy and tactic under the definite communicative circumstances. Communicative strategy is an intentionally realized complex of speech acts related to planned speech interaction with an interlocutor to achieve a certain communicative goal. Communication tactics serve a practical instrument for this realization.

Thus, two types of communication tactics are differentiated: evaluation production (positive or negative) tactics, used by the addresser as the evaluation subject and reaction to evaluation (positive or negative) tactics, used by the addressee as the evaluation object.

Analysis of "face-saving" strategies and tactics realization in dialogue discourse

The role of dialogue communication is steadily growing in modern communication space. It is not an exaggeration to say that Modern English language is characterized by the expansion of dialogue. Its reasons are rooted on the one hand in social-political phenomena (democratization of all spheres of life) and on the other hand in the immanent characteristics of this language form.

Dialogue is a form of active communicative interconnection between two or more subjects, its material result being a creation of specific discourse that consists of a sequence of conversational turns. One of the subjects may be of integrated, polymodal character, i.e. may be represented by a group of persons. Dialogue is opposed to other forms of conversational interaction as being the most constructive one and flexible to the maximum.

According to modern linguistic communication theory, communicative strategies are realized in the form of gradual influence on the interlocutor, tactics are implemented in speech methods of strategy realization and moves are used as practical means of reaching a global goal (Исцепс 2006) in different communication situations within a dialogue discourse. At least two participants are key components of a dialogue discourse, both willing to realize the same goal. In situations where “face-saving” is both the aim and means of communication the participants turn their attention to different background assumptions that manifest themselves in the choice of communication strategy.

Cooperative and confrontational communicative strategies of “face-saving” are differentiated depending on consensus or dissensus mindset (Исцепс 2006: 70). These strategies correlate with the following: harmonious and disharmonious dialogues, solidarity strategy (reducing communicative and social distance between communicators with common social characteristics) and power strategy (maintaining communicative distance between communicators with different social characteristics) (Трипольская 1999: 142), harmonious (effective) and disharmonious (ineffective and unstructured) communication (Трипольская 1999: 27, 31), cooperative and non-cooperative strategies (Литвак 2005: 142), harmonious and confrontation communication (Колокольцева 2000), cooperative (solidarity and tact) and non-cooperative (self-defense and reconnaissance) behaviour (Клюев 1998: 102).

The communicators may have different relations: equal, subordinate and dominant

(Земская 2006: 173). The hierarchy of social ties includes the opposition “friend-stranger”. Presence or absence of family, professional, friendly and other relations determine social affiliation and individual’s behaviour toward “friends” (same social group members) and “strangers” (other social groups representatives) (Балясникова 2004: 268). Without considering communicators’ social status the communication has an artificial character.

A series of “face-saving” tactics and turns are distinguished in connection with competing persons’ status:

1. Personal status emphasis tactics as in the following communicative situation of competition between a father and a son in playing football:

(1) “That’s called a feint”, he (Robert) shouted triumphantly, as he ran back past his prostrate father.

(2a) “I know what it’s called”, he (Andrew) said, laughing.

(2b) “You seem to have forgotten who taught you the feint in the first place.

(2c) “Let’s see if you can do it twice running”, he added, returning to defend the goal...

(2d) “I’m going to get you for that”, he said.

(2e) “Your turn to defend the goal”.

(3) “No goal. No goal, Dad, no goal!”. He tossed the ball confidently back along the ground to his father’s feet.

(4) “Right, the fooling around is over”, said Andrew, not quite convinced.

(5) “Come on, Dad”, Robert complained (O’Harra 1992: 242–243).

In the above situation Robert practices a tactics of raising personal status while demonstrating his knowledge and skills (1), (3), pretending to be equal to his father in playing football. Son’s courteous/polite addressing his father (3), (5) manifests his orientation at “saving his own face” and establishing harmonious communication with his father. The father restores to the tactics of emphasizing his own higher status by means of the following communicative moves: personal knowledge demonstration (2a, 2b, 2d), doubt in the counterpart’s skills (2c, 4), dicta-

ting the game rules (2e). Epistemic verb "know" and father's partial citing of the preceding son's reply "what it's called" in 2a and construction "to be going to" in 2d are verbal signals of father's confidence.

Cooperative strategy can be traced in the author's words that characterize father's manner of talking: "laughingly, not quite convinced". The verb "seem" (2b) minimizes the categorical manner of speaking and the predicative "right" (4) helps to express consent thus helping the father look convincing.

2. Tactics of emphasis on dominating counterpart's position and raising one's own low status is demonstrated in the dialogue between a new girl-employee, whose responsibility is to look after horses and an experienced chief instructor:

(1) "I've followed Seabright's racing history", she (Sharon) said. "It's impressive. I consider myself fortunate to be working with you".

(2) Mac practically snarled, "Jason never stipulated that kind of an arrangement. I report to him; you do the same".

(3a) "This is my first big opportunity, Mac. My other jobs were at small ranches, but I worked hard. I'm aware that I skipped a few steps because of family friendship, and I hope you won't hold it against me. I'm serious about what I do,

(3b) and I had looked forward to learning more from you".

(4) *His eyes seemed to blaze with fury. "I'll do my job, you do yours, and we'll get along fine"* (O'Harra 1992: 33).

Sharon intends to gain the instructor's confidence and alleviate strained relations that resulted from the rivalry for the spheres of influence at work. She chooses cooperative tactics of "face-saving" at the expense of stressing the counterpart's higher status by flattery, approval (1) and emphasis on his better professional knowledge and skills (3b). In reply the instructor distributes responsibilities (2), (4), thus practicing a tactics of confrontational domination to demonstrate his power and position role. As a result Sharon restores to the coopera-

tive tactics of raising her own low status while stressing her personal features – industriousness (I worked hard) and gravity (I'm serious about what I do) (3a).

The instructor's reluctance to make communicative and social distance smaller is revealed on the syntactic level, i.e. in the use of short sentences. His opposition "I-you" (I'll do my job, you do yours) proves the demonstrative phase of the conflict (9: 59). Sharon's determination to reach consensus is realized through the use of lexical units with positive connotation "impressive, fortunate, serious, big opportunity". Though the cooperative strategy doesn't work because of the instructor's confrontation.

Within "face-saving" confrontation strategy there exists counterpart's status lowering tactics to demonstrate one's real or imaginary dominating position, e.g.:

(1a) "Boy", she said, "I can't believe how dumb you are sometimes. (1b) We can't afford this".

(2) "So why are we here? Why aren't we somewhere we can afford? I asked you upstairs and you said I shouldn't worry, that you were the adult and I was the child".

(3) "Well, children order hamburgers when they go out to expensive restaurants. That's all they're allowed to order". (O'Harra 1992: 13).

The above situation is a conflict one: a mother and a son compete for the right to chose courses at the restaurant. To emphasize her own dominating position and "saving her face" the mother uses communicative moves of humbling (1a), dictating terms (1b) and interdiction (3).

So, in the communicative situation of rivalry the following socially marked "face-saving" tactics of cooperative strategy are distinguished:

1. Raising personal low status by demonstrating own knowledge, skills and merits;

2. Stressing personal status by emphasizing own knowledge and skills, expressing doubt in the counterpart's competence, distributing responsibilities;

3. Demonstrating the counterpart's superior status by means of approval, flattery, expressing respect.

Confrontation “face-saving” strategy is realized in the following socially marked communicative tactics:

1) lowering counterpart’s status by saying about his insignificance and little chances to win, negations, focus on counterpart’s failures, doubt in his authority and standing;

2) dominating by means of communicative moves of prohibition, dictating terms, giving orders, distributing responsibilities, demanding, threatening, pressing recommendation, reminding of one’s own post and sphere of influence.

While planning the communication, the addresser should consider not only the communication subject, realization of communicative goal, determine his own communication strategy and tactics (cooperative or confrontational), but also to foresee the communication conditions. Irrelevance of the communication act proper may be the main reason for failed communication.

Quite often a communication act may be untimely or not to the point, thus negatively influencing the addresser and causing his confrontation tune which may imbalance further course of conversation and bring it to a stop. That’s why the communication initiator should frame the future communication and demonstrate its relevance.

Linguists determined a certain number of errors that constitute a significant group of communicative mistakes while analyzing the problem of communication act relevance. The present study led to defining communicative failure type, the major feature of communication act being its irrelevance under the circumstances of communication interaction:

- 1) communicative act is inappropriate;
- 2) communicative act is untimely;
- 3) communicative act is unbalanced;
- 4) communicative act is disoriented.

Conclusions

Classification of attitudinal communicative tactics used by both the addresser and the

addressee within a dialogue discourse enables to comprehend pragmatic conditions and pragmatic mechanism of successful interpersonal “face saving” communication.

Communicators’ violation of the cooperative principle, “inconformity” with the frame on the cognitive level may be of either intentional or unintentional character and is practiced as the speaker’s efficient “face-saving” tactics.

In cases when “face saving” is both the aim and means of communication, the participants turn their attention to different mindsets that bring about a certain communicative strategy. Thus, depending on consensus or dissensus mindset cooperative and confrontation “face-saving” communicative strategies are differentiated. The following socially marked “face-saving” cooperative strategy’s tactics were determined:

1) raising personal low status while demonstrating own knowledge, skills and merits;

2) emphasizing personal status while putting stress on own knowledge, skills, doubt in counterpart’s competence and distribution of responsibilities;

3) recognition of counterpart’s higher status by expressing approval, flattery, respect.

The aim of “face saving” confrontational strategy is to make your counterpart look negative by criticizing his activity. “Face saving” confrontational strategy is realized in the situations of lowering the counterpart’s status by means of stating his insignificance, little chances to succeed, expressing negations, stressing his failures, doubts in his authority and standing; in dominating by means of dictating terms, giving orders, distributing responsibilities, demanding, threatening, pressing recommendation, reminding of one’s own post and sphere of influence.

In cases when cooperative tactics don’t work, it seems efficient to practice confrontational strategies differentiating between:

1) the tactics of lowering counterpart’s status by means of stating his insignificance, little chances to succeed, expressing negations, stressing his failures, doubts in his authority and standing;

2) dominating by means of dictating terms, giving orders, distributing responsibilities, demanding, threatening, pressing recommendation, reminding of one's own post and sphere of influence to demonstrate personal real or imaginary dominating position.

To fully and successfully realize the above-mentioned strategies it is important to define not only the communication subject and aim but also its relevance, appropriateness, conditions and its harmonious character as well.

The results and conclusions of present analysis may be used in language teaching as they promote felicitous communication in both public and private life and are instrumental in avoiding possible conflict situations.

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KAI KURIE „REPUTACIJOS IŠSAUGOJIMO“ ASPEKTAI DIALOGO DISKURSE

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Per pastaruosius du dešimtmečius žmogiškoji komunikacija tapo kalbos tyrėjų ypatingo dėmesio objektu. Žmonėms, siekiantiems sukurti gerus tarpusavio santykius, svarbiausiu veiksniu tampa kalba ir aplinka. Kalba, apimdama daugybę reikšmių, ne tik padeda komunikantams tinkamai bendrauti, bet ir saugo individo reputaciją tarpasmeninės komunikacijos metu. Straipsnyje šiuolaikinės anglų kalbos pokalbio diskurse naginėjamos kalbos ir kalbėjimo reikšmės, kaip instrumentarijai, siekiantys išsaugoti asmens reputaciją.

Čia pateikiama kalbos tyrimų teorinė analizė, grindžiama mandagumo teorija ir bendradarbiavimo principais, taip pat aprašomos ir analizuojamos asmens reputacijos išsaugojimo strategijos ir taktikos šiuolaikinės anglų kalbos pokalbio diskurse. Straipsnyje pateikiamos teorinės medžiagos apibendrinimas ir analizė padeda suvokti įvairių lygių tarpasmeninio bendravimo efektyvumo prielaidas ir reikšmę žmogiškosios komunikacijos srityje. Taigi, šio mokslinio tyrimo objektas yra labai aktualus ir pritaikomas bendrojoje edukologijoje bei užsienio kalbų dėstymo metodikoje.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: reputacijos išsaugojimo strategija, reputacijos išsaugojimo taktika, pokalbio diskursas, komunikacija, pozityvus ir negatyvus bendravimas, bendravimo tikslai, komunikantas, mandagumo teorija, bendradarbiavimo principai.

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