UDC 811.111'42

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SPEECH TACTICS IN MASS MEDIA DISCOURSE

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Abstract. *The article deals with the basic speech tactics used in mass media discourse. It has been stated that such tactics as contact establishment and speech interaction termination, yielding up initiative or its preserving are compulsory for the communicative situation of a talk show. Language personalities of television talk shows anchors and linguistic ways of the interview organisation are stressed. The material is amply illustrated with relevant examples.*
Keywords: conversational move; interview; mass media discourse; speech initiative; speech tactics, talk show.

1. Problem statement

Mass media discourse plays an important role in the development of the contemporary society. It moulds public awareness inflicting in an implicit or explicit manner beliefs, perceptions or emotional assessment of a certain event. In other words "media turn into the most important component of the social system since they create the system" [16, p. 17]. The influence of media on the society as a whole and each of its members in particular has raised scientific interest of the representatives of different branches of humane studies (sociologists, psychologists, linguists) in the research of certain aspects of mass media activities.

2. Research and related publication analysis

Discourse origin and functioning issues are in the mainstream of the contemporary linguistic studies. Under the conditions of contemporary information boom, mass media activities eliminate national borders. Mass media discourse analysis has become particularly essential in the limelight of the global communicational interaction in numerous fields of human practices, such as politics, science and culture.

T. van Dijk states that "most work deals with various sociological or socio-psychological theories of mass media institutions, of audiences or effects, or the relations between media on the one hand and society and culture on the other hand" [20, p. 1].

Systematic discourse analysis of media messages or so-called "content analysis" is an interdisciplinary study which unites semantic, stylistic, pragmatic etc studies of media texts with the research into their influence on the audience. Within mass media and communication studies, most media researchers do not draw the sharp definitional distinctions between text, content and discourse analysis.

Media researchers and academics [1; 3; 4] refer to quantitative and qualitative content analysis and most of them view the fields as complementary and part of a continuum of analysing texts to try to determine their likely meanings and impact on audiences.

3. Aim of the paper

The paper is aimed at studying one of the types of the mass media discourse — television discourse.
The latter has relevant social tasks, retains generic system features and reveals common invariant characteristics.

A number of formal criteria allow to subdivide the whole variety of television products into several genres. An important place among them belongs to an interview, which is defined as a significant genre of journalism since it gives the audience an opportunity to get credible information from the primary source. A television interview adds veracity to the message due to the vividness. Audiovisual channel of information transmission contribute prosodic and non-verbal means fostering popularity of interview among the audience.

4. A talk show as an interview type

The structure of such type of media discourse as a television interview is in the centre of attention of several studies [7, 11, 13].

A discourse analysis emphasises its diverse aspects, viz.

a) participant structure (the interviewer, the respondent, the audience);

b) structure of knowledge which the interviewer seeks to complement;

c) structure of communicative intentions;

d) structure of "events" — units of global interview organisation.

These structures successively determine each other in the above order. The interviewer plays a leading role, he determines pace of communication flow.

However in a media interview an interviewer represents interests of the audience and is successful to the extent to which he can reflect the cognitive structure of the audience [8].

Talk show is a distinct type of the television interview. Combining essential features of an interview, a debate and a game, it is concentrated around the personality of a talk show host. It is the most personalised screen form. One may reasonably claim that talk show makes stars and stars make talk show [11, p. 189]

Our research is based on one of the longest-running programmes of the USA television — "Larry King Live" which was aired on CNN from 1985 till 2010 and attracted attention of over a million of TV viewers and "The Andrew Marr Show", an hour-long British television programme broadcast on BBC which was launched in 2005 as "Sunday AM", but was renamed "The Andrew Marr Show" for the new series in two years with average around 2 million viewers an episode, representing a 30% audience share.

Hosts' personalities had a great impact on the popularity of the shows among the audience. In our opinion, that is why the analysis of the language personalities of talk show anchors and their speech tactics will allow to define the main features of a television interview discourse.

5. TV anchor's language personality

Communicative function of the language is realized via human speech activities.

Yu.N. Karaulov states that a language personality is the pervasive idea that penetrates any aspect of language studies and simultaneously breaks down boundaries between disciplines which study a human beyond his language [6, p. 45].

Contemporary linguistic studies are based on the anthropocentric principle which, according to E.S. Kubryakova, lies at studying scientific issues primarily according to their role for a human, their mission in human life activities and their functions in the development of a human personality and its advancement.

This principle is revealed via placing a human in the centre of the analysis of events, via his involvement in defining potential and the ultimate objective of the analysis [10, p. 212].

A human performs the central conceptual and organizational functions in the discourse, since the discourse activity cannot be studied beyond cultural and socio-historic data, beyond the record of the personality who conducted discursive activities, his stance, conditions under which the activities occurred etc. [9, p. 79].

The discourse of a language personality is the process of speech recorded in a relatively long period of time [2, p. 238].

Thus our study of the talk show anchor's speech tactics is based on transcripts of two programmes: "Larry King Live" (dated from January, 1 2000 till December, 4 2011) and "The Andrew Marr Show" (dated from January, 8 2012 till January, 6 2013, after which the host suffered a stroke and the show is now anchored by guest presenters).

6. A talk show structure

Speech interaction in the communicative situation of a talk show, like any other interaction, is subordinated to the general rules of intercourse, since the latter occurs within the framework of socially acceptable behaviour.

Interpersonal communication of non-conflict character is framed by the etiquette rules.

Each of the programmes starts from the introduction of a guest or guests mainly followed by a greeting.

The main function of a greeting is to attune communicants psychologically for the speech interaction. During the greeting interlocutors choose the form of communication in the context of its tonality. A greeting creates "ties of commonness" with the help of an ordinary exchange of words [19, p. 386] and thus "sets a tone of the whole conversation" [2, p. 90]. Andrew Marr's guests are mostly politicians, consequently the tone of greetings as well as the whole interaction is rather formal: ANDREW MARR: … I'm joined now by the Ambassador of Turkey in London, Unal Cevikoz. *Welcome* Ambassador. UNAL CEVIKOS: *Good morning* [18].

Though some of the guests choose less formal tone and may use even informal idioms in their speech: ANDREW MARR: …Harriet Harman, Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, Shadow Culture Secretary, has been a lifelong campaigner for women's rights, and I think it's thirty years ago to the day since you first arrived in the House of Commons, Harriet Harman? HARRIET HARMAN: Indeed. I'm just *getting the hang of it* [18].

"Larry King Live" show invited representatives of politics and business, sport and show business, that is why introduction and greetings varied from totally formal (Good evening. Vladimir Putin is the prime minister of Russia. He previously served as President of the Russian Federation. And it's a great pleasure to welcome him back to LARRY KING LIVE [12]) to neutral (Good evening. Stevie Wonder needs no introduction. So why am I introducing him? Except for this. He is a genius, one of the most influential artists and people of our time [12]) and friendly informal (Wanted, dead or alive, Jon Bon Jovi here for the hour. Next on LARRY KING LIVE [12]).

Communication starts with the ritual of greeting, there is also an appropriate ritual for the termination of communication. First of all, it should be mentioned that communicative situation of a talk show is limited in time. When the programme comes to the end the participants of the show demonstrate their readiness to terminate speech interaction uttering:

— farewell (KING: Why are we yelling? Time now for AC — Where did the ring go? Time now for "AC 360." I almost lost it. BRAND: I know. My wife's going to kill me. KING: *Good night* [12]);

— gratitude to each other and the audience (KING: *Thank you*, Mike. TYSON: Yes, you're welcome, Larry. KING: Mike Tyson. Hope you enjoyed this hour... *Thank you* for joining us [20]; ANDREW MARR: Ed Miliband, for now thank you very much indeed. ED MILIBAND: Thank you [18]);

— positive emotions (KING: Al, an honor to have you here. PACINO: It's an honor to be here. Congratulations for everything. Congratulations [12]);

— wishing good luck (KING: Thanks, Monica. LEWINSKY: Oh, thank you, Larry. KING: Good luck. LEWINSKY: Thanks [12]);

— invitation for the next meeting (KING: Mr. Prime Minister, I thank you so much. I look forward to seeing you again soon on your soil. PUTIN: Larry, I invite you. I await you here in Moscow. You've never visited Moscow and I am positive you will like it. KING: Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister [12]).

7. Speech initiative in a talk show

From the viewpoint of communicative interaction organization, a talk show is a dialogue between the interviewer and a person, invited as a guest. A talk show genre presupposes involvement of the audience. In both programmes the audience is not present in the studio. In "Larry King Live" feedback is at times represented explicitly by telephone calls from viewers. The anchor defines the location of the callers, but their names remain unknown. For example: KING: And we start now with Prospect, Ohio — hello; KING: Chicago, hello. Hello? [12]; KING: OK. Cheshire, England, hello [12]. In "The Andrew Marr Show" the presence of the audience is implicit: both the anchor and guests are aware that the show is aimed at the audience. For example: ANDREW MARR: And because we've seen a very, very good fly on the wall documentary about this called 2012, I have to ask: do you know the difference between legacy and sustainability? LORD COE: Yes I do, but I just don't think your audience this morning would want me to go into great detail about that. ANDREW MARR: I'll bet they wouldn't. Sebastian Coe, thank you very much indeed [18].

According to O.S. Issers, the type of communication in a talk show can be defined as an unequal dialogue "when speech initiative always belongs to one of the participants" [5, p. 213]. Such type of communication, namely distribution of initiative and the influence of one of the participants dominance on the communication flow, is analysed in details in a number of works [15].

Speech initiative in the communicative situation of an interview belongs to the anchor. Some of his conversational moves have special purpose — influence on the conversation flow. Such moves have metatextual character and contain a message about the message or "a statement about the statement" [17]. These utterances help the speaker to coordinate the communication flow in the definite direction. For example: KING: What do you think about that? Good question. LEWINSKY: Great question. KING: *And you can answer it* [20]; KING: Darva, *how would you respond to what Sally just said*? [12]; DAVID CAMERON: ... that has enabled these low interest rates to continue. ANDREW MARR: Well *let's come to a couple of those decisions then* [18].

It is natural for the communicative situation of an interview that speech initiative in the dialogue belongs to the anchor. Meanwhile the task of the interviewer is not to express his own opinion on the issue, but to encourage the guest to fully expose his judgment in a logical and coherent way. In this case it is relevant to mention the yielding up initiative tactics.

Conversational moves that encourage guests to take the initiative should meet a number of demands: "one has to avoid ambiguous concepts; basic questions have to be composed distinctly and briefly, because the guest might not remember a long question and, as a result, answer only a part of it (usually the last one); questions do not have to offer alternative, otherwise the guest may be trapped between the two possibilities of the answer" [11, p. 176-177].

Questions aired by the anchors of the analysed shows meet such demands precisely. For example: KING: Tell me first about this Jenny Craig thing and how it happened. LEWINSKY: Well, it's — first, let me say it's just been a wonderful, wonderful experience for me so far. And I'm really fortunate to have been this successful at it. And... KING: *How did it happen*? *Did they call you*? *You call them*? [12]; ANDREW MARR: *Has doing this job changed you?* BORIS JOHNSON: Yes, it has in a sense. ANDREW MARR: *In what way?* [18].

Nevertheless, these rules are not always respected in interviews with the renowned political representatives, which are most close to the communicative situation of the protocol interview when a journalist asks questions, agreed in advance. For example, in Larry King's conversation with the British ex-Prime Minister Tony Blair one can find both compound questions (KING: You've spoken, Mr. Prime Minister, about the cardinal importance — you call it — of the state building exercise of the Palestinian Authority. *How is that exercise going*? *What would constitute what you would call real change*? [12]) and questions offering alternative (KING: How would you assess, Mr. Prime Minister, the Obama administration since they've taken office with regard to this issue? *Have things moved forward, have they gone backward, have we stayed mired*? [12]). Similar examples can be found in "The Andrew Marr Show": ANDREW MARR: *Can I ask you about this audit of European powers or competencies that you've announced and that you are undertaking as a government?* An audit sounds rather a neutral thing, but I wonder *does this then lead inevitably (and rightly in your view) onto a sort of shopping list of powers that you are determined to repatriate?* [18]; ANDREW MARR: …do you think it is still the case (if you thought it was before) that *it would be a disaster for us economically to actually leave the union rather than stay in if that's the choice*? If they're going to go for a deeper union, as they clearly are, we're going to have a pretty big existential choice to make [18].

Such examples may testify about the prepared character of the interaction.

Scholars state that active participation in the dialogue, viz. involvement in the process of the speech interaction and readiness to take up the speech initiative, is manifested in taking offered initiative [21].

Such readiness for role switching can be exposed with the help of grammatical markers of cohesion [4]:
— reference devices (KING: Appropriately enough. Was *it* — *it* had to be tough. I've interviewed George Schering. I'm sure you knew George Schering. WONDER: He was great. Great man. KING: Yes. *He* said that when you've never seen, *he* didn't regard *it* as a handicap. Because *that's* the only thing *he* knew [12]);
— substitution devices (KING: Our next *one* is the adult porcupine. HANNA: Yes, I don't believe — KING: I suppose, a child porcupine; KING: Why do you think everybody likes you so much? And everybody *does*. There's nobody that doesn't like Willie Nelson. You turn 77 April 30th. NELSON: Well, I like everybody, *too*, you know [12]);
— ellipsis (KING: Why have you finally come? PACINO: Come here? KING: Yes, finally, after years of asking? PACINO: Senility, I guess; KING: You still feel that way? PACINO: Sure. KING: Do you still feel — PACINO: Yes, I do. But I'm so shy now I wear sunglasses everywhere I go. KING: I mean you play so — PACINO: I sleep with these [12]). The use of ellipsis referring to the previous utterance of the other communicant leads to the frequent role switching in the dialogue and thus results in yielding up initiative.

The above mentioned examples prove that grammatical markers of cohesion can function as markers of some speech tactics of control over distribution of communicative initiative [Иссерс, Villaume].

In some situations the interviewer has to apply initiative preserving tactics because guests tend to avoid the topic of the conversation. For example: KING: You also disclose, Barbara — George discloses something very personal about you... He wrote that when you once had a miscarriage, you showed him the foetus in the jar. BARBARA BUSH: No, really the truth is — KING: *We touched on it before*. But we didn't elaborate. BARBARA BUSH: … you know, *memories dim a little bit* but anyway — but he was very — KING: *Were you shocked that he put it in the book?*

BARBARA BUSH: No. He asked permission and I gave him permission… KING: *You had differing opinions, though, on pro-life, did you not?* BARBARA BUSH: *I don't remember*. GEORGE H.W. BUSH: Yes, they did. BARBARA BUSH: *Shh, George*… GEORGE H.W. BUSH: When I was president. BARBARA BUSH: I wasn't president, nor was I president when George was president. But that's one issue. I'm not a one-issue person… KING: *But you have your own opinions*. BARBARA BUSH: Of course I do... [12]. As we see, Larry King refers to the very private episode from the Bushes life, which was mentioned in the ex-President's book and is quite interesting for the audience and Barbara Bush tries to decline the offered topic explaining it with the lack of memories. In the next example Larry King did not manage to preserve initiative trying to discuss Princess Diana's death with the member of the Royal family. Thus he had to seize the initiative asking about quite urgent issue of that time: KING: *Do you have any suspicions about her death*? FERGUSON: *I'm not going to answer those questions*. KING: Because her would-be father-in-law does, as you know. And there is always speculation in these kind of things. *You don't, or you are not going to answer?* FERGUSON: *I'm not going to get into that, Larry*. KING: *OK. There is something everyone has an opinion on*. I know you will have an opinion on this. What should happen to the little boy from Cuba? FERGUSON: *Ah, another ticklish topic*. Well, tell me what's the latest news right now [12]. In both examples guests apply the speech tactics of avoidance of the initiative.

As it has already been stated, the task of the interviewer is to help the guest to express himself. Thus the anchor applies the tactics of speech initiative encouragement. For example: LEWINSKY: Well, it was sort of a mutual coming together. They contacted a family friend, and I was at a point in my life where I was looking to not just... KING: *Lose weight*? LEWINSKY: Not just lose the weight, though, but really get control of it and finally be rid of some of my food issues…[12]. With the help of the specifying question the host encourages the guest to articulate her thought. In the following example: GATES: Well, …our first customer was down in Albuquerque, New Mexico. So I left... KING: *Who was it?* GATES: It's a little company called MITS. At the time, it was the first company with a kit computer. You could send in about $300 and you got a bag of parts, and if you were lucky enough to get it assembled right, the lights would blink. That was about all this machine could do. KING: *But they liked something you had*. GATES: But that was the beginning. Yes [12] — the anchor uses the tactics of demonstration of interest, then the tactics of approval (positive assessment of the partner's professional qualities).

8. Conclusions

The conducted analysis of the talk show discourse revealed that the interviewer applies a number of speech tactics essential for interaction organisation. The tactics of beginning and termination of communication, yielding up and preserving of the speech initiative are among the most popular and wide-spread ones. It was specified during the research that the choice of speech tactics depends on the type of the discourse, interpersonal relations of the communicants and the stage of the interaction. The repertory of speech tactics characterises the language personality of the interviewer.

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О.В. Каптюрова. Мовленнєві тактики в мас-медійному дискурсі

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На матеріалі англійської мови розглянуто мовленнєві тактики, що використовуються в мас-медійному дискурсі. Виявлено, що такі тактики, як установлення контакту, завершення мовленнєвої взаємодії, передача ініціативи або її збереження, є обов'язковими для комунікативної ситуації ток-шоу. Значну увагу приділено мовній особистості інтерв'юера. Для ілюстрації наведено відповідні приклади.

Ключові слова: інтерв'ю; мас-медійний дискурс; мовленнєва ініціатива; мовленнєва тактика; мовленнєвий хід; ток-шоу.

Е. В. Каптюрова. Речевые тактики в масс-медийном дискурсе

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На материале английского языка рассмотрены речевые тактики, используемые в масс-медийном дискурсе. Определено, что такие тактики, как установление контакта, завершение речевого взаимодействия, передача инициативы или ее сохранение, являются обязательными для коммуникативной ситуации ток-шоу. Значительное внимание уделено языковой личности интервьюера. Для иллюстрации приведены соответствующие примеры.

Ключевые слова: интервью; масс-медийный дискурс; речевая инициатива; речевая тактика; речевой ход; ток-шоу.

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