

THE TACTIC OF ASSESSMENT IN ECONOMIC DISCOURSE (THE CONCEPT OF SINGLE MARKET)

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The aim of the article is to describe the trends ongoing in modern economic discourse. Economic discourse is considered to be a part of business discourse texts united by the topic of commerce and economic relations. The author looks into speech influence means used by the participants of online communication in social media posts. The work is carried out in the framework of functional pragmatic paradigm. Studying the correlation between the speech forms and their functions, this approach allows to identify the main speech strategies and tactics used by specialists in economics and ordinary people discussing economic issues. The tactic of assessment is the object of the current study. The excerpts from social media involving debate on *single market* issue were chosen by method of continuous sampling. They included the posts from accounts of European Union Commission, EU Finance, Confederation of British Industry, BBC Politics et al. The author singles out speech means characterizing the phenomenon from a positive and negative perspective. They are treated as a reflection of collective consciousness of Europeans and demonstrate an attitude of doubt and skepticism towards the single market. To conclude, online communication in the field of economics and business proves to be a valuable object for linguistic research. New mass media play an important role in formation of discourse field and a powerful tool for expressing public opinion.

Key words: business discourse, economic discourse, functional analysis, online communication, registers of discourse, linguacultural consciousness, single market concept

1. INTRODUCTION

Discourse is considered to be a reflection of mental processes of an individual or even a group of individuals. The idea of a single market was introduced with the appearance the European Economic Area (1994). Recently, the necessity of a single market has been questioned because of the choice of Great Britain to leave the EU. The discourse evolving around the notion of single market nowadays reflects varying attitudes of the citizens of EU member states towards their economic and political unity or separateness.

Topicality of the issue under discussion is explained by close connection between the social processes happening in human society and discourse. Speech material included excerpts from social media involving debate on *single market* issue from Twitter accounts of European Union Commission, EU Finance, Confederation of British Industry et al. The choice of empirical material is explained by the spontaneous, synchronous and interactive nature of online communication [Kobrin, 2016; Lyons, 2018; Trepak, 2016]. These peculiarities make online comments a trustworthy source of information about real attitudes of communicators to the concept of single market.

The article aims to fulfill the following tasks:

- identify the place of digital means of communications in formation of new registers of discourse;
- describe the pragmatic potential of verbal means which reflect collective linguacultural consciousness;
- disclose the functions fulfilled by the tactic of assessment in persuasive online discourse.

Theoretical grounding of the work lies in the field of functional pragmatics and discourse analysis.

2. PRAGMATIC FACTORS OF ONLINE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

The pragmatic approach is most important for studying professional discourse since this type of discourse makes an emphasis on the purpose and pragmatic aim of communication. It is connected with the fact that the key aim of professional communication is achieving a certain goal. Often, the factor that determines the outcome of communication is the ability of speakers to produce an impact on the other party. Achieving this goal requires careful selection of language means taking into account various aspects of discourse. As for online communication on economic topics, two major goals can be singled out:

- 1) communicative goal of expressing opinion (protest / show solidarity / support etc)

e.g. *The #SingleMarket is the beating heart of the EU. A generation of Europeans has grown up with it and benefited from it. We will keep making it stronger so that the next generation will benefit even more* [EU Commission, 2019].

- 2) communicative goal of expressing attitude (approval, rejection, doubt, etc)

e.g. *The Single Market, Britain's big achievement in the EU, is one of the EU's greatest successes. And having been a driving force in leading the EU in setting it up, we now plan to walk away. Time for a rethink. Time for the People's Vote* [Ibidem].

The basics of pragmatic linguistics were established by the founders of semiotics Ch. Pierce and Ch. Morris. In linguistics the object of pragmatics is the relation between linguistic units and conditions of their use in a certain communicative-pragmatic space. From the point of view of pragmatics, the place and time of communication, goals and expectations also play a significant role in communication, in addition to the speaker/writer and listener/reader factor.

Linguists divide the pragmatic research into two spheres [Susov, 2006]. The first one examines the pragmatic potential of particular language units. The second is represented by the theory of speech acts and devoted to interactions of communicants in the communication process.

The theory of speech acts is based on the ideas that originated in the 1930s and later stated by J. Austin, which have been developed in the works of J. Searle. The object of study in the theory of speech acts is the speech act consisting in uttering the sentence in a situation of a direct communication with a listener.

According to J. Austin, a speech act consists of three levels. A speech act is a locutionary act in relation to the linguistic means used in its process. A speech act is an illocutionary act in relation to the manifested objectives and a number of conditions for its implementation (the intention of the speaker is to make a contact, to characterize the addressee, etc.); in relation to its results it serves as a perlocutionary act (the effect on the addressee) [Austin, 1986].

Active development of the theory of speech acts has given the opportunity to explore language in its functioning and trace the result of its impact on the communication partner. It was found that the successful speech act depends on how the listener identifies the illocution (intention) of the speaker. Successful (effective) communication is interpreted as the one leading to the achievement of the goal. The pragmatic component of communication involves identifying the intentions of communicants, setting goals, ways and conditions of fulfilling them. In case of a contradiction of the intentions, linguistic methods of their elimination and achieving mutual understanding, leading to a productive collaboration, are discussed [Radyuk, 2013].

As an ontological category, discourse includes text, communication participants and pragmatic parameters of the communicative situation. "One aspect of discourse is addressed to the pragmatic situation, which is aimed to determine coherence of discourse, its communicative adequacy, its implications and presuppositions for its interpretation. Another aspect of discourse is addressed to mental processes of the participants of communication: ethnographic,

psychological, and sociocultural rules and strategies of speech production and comprehension in these or that conditions [...]” [Arutyunova, 1990, pp.137].

The nature of speech communication is primarily determined by the pragmatic factors, i.e. the communicative intention (purpose and theme); method (code, channel, and norm of interaction) of communication; subject-address relations of the communicants; the tone of communication and the genre of speech. The pragmatic realization of language means that the selected linguistic material (in particular, terminology), its grammatical expression in the statement, correlation of the communicative situation with a particular fragment of the subject area of reality interpret the meanings, providing mutual understanding between the speaker and the addressee [Gurjev, 2003].

The viewpoint of the speaker/writer is implemented in a complex structure. The main elements of this structure are, on the one hand, the information that the speaker is trying to convey to the listener, and, on the other hand, the pragmatics, which, firstly, determines the selection of this information, and secondly, promotes its transmission and successful communication to the recipient to encourage him or her to certain actions and behavior.

Pragmatics is one of the key areas of the functional linguistics as it addresses the issues related to the following sequence: the purpose of communication – the tool – the result. The pragmatics of verbal communication allows to analyze the functional load of linguistic means. The questions about what the functional role of the language means is, how and under what conditions they implement the objectives and its most crucial function – the impact, are resolved in the field of functional linguistics.

3. ONLINE DISCOURSE IN THE SYSTEM OF REGISTERS OF BUSINESS ENGLISH

To understand the essence of online business communication it is necessary to understand its place in the system of business discourse registers. There is still no unified typology of registers of this discursive type. Register is defined as the type of a language in which a set of lexical and grammatical features stand out. For example, T.B. Nazarova identifies several registers, the mutual relations between which are based on their symbiosis: socializing (conversation techniques), telephoning (communication by phone for business purposes), business correspondence, business documents and contracts, business meetings, presentations, negotiating (negotiation technique), media (mass media) [Nazarova & Levina, 2006, pp.7]. Each of the listed registers has its own peculiarities, but in real business communication registers are connected with each other.

E.N. Vvedenskaya and L.G. Pavlova distinguish the following classification of business discourse registers: business conversation, business negotiations, business presentation, telephone conversation [Vvedenskaya & Pavlova, 2012, pp. 30-44].

1. A business conversation is the aspiration of one person or group of people by means of words to create the desire of another person or group of people to act that will change the situation or establish new relations between the participants of the conversation [Sosnovskaya, 2011]. Business conversations can be formal and informal, and they are subdivided into a) personal; b) disciplinary; c) problematic; d) organisational; e) creative; f) reception of visitors.

2. Business negotiation is a discussion with the aim of concluding an agreement between someone on any issue. Unlike a business conversation, the negotiations are more formal and, as a rule, provide for signing of documents that determine the mutual obligations of the parties. According to the *field of activity*, business negotiations can be diplomatic, political, economic, etc. Negotiations can have the following *objectives*: conclusion of an agreement, coordination of actions, redistribution of obligations, etc. By the *nature of the relationship* between the parties, the negotiations are divided into partnership, competitive, confrontational [Veveve & Sannikova, 2018].

3. A business presentation is a public presentation of a product or service. According to *the nature of the audience*, presentations can be external and internal, as well as ascending and descending. According to their *goal*, negotiations can be promotive and informative. By the *size of the audience*, business presentations are divided into public, chamber (up to 15 people) and private.

4. Conversation by the phone includes incoming and outgoing calls.

It seems possible to supplement this classification with business disputes and conflicts. According to A.N. Asadov, N.N. Pokrovskaya, O.A. Kosalimova, business dispute is “a denial of the opponent’s position because of diverging opinions” [Asadov et al., 2010, pp. 46]. When participants are critical to each other on a personal level, the dispute becomes interpersonal. Forms of a public business dispute include debates, disputes, polemics.

It is evident that modern electronic means of communication provide another type – online business communication which can be monological / dialogical, oral / written, use audio / video channels [Lou, 2014]. This extralinguistic factor is taken into consideration by discourse analysis.

The characteristics of Twitter posts largely coincide with the characteristics of entries in other social media. Despite the ability to add images and videos, text plays a major role in Twitter. Nevertheless, the Twitter genre has some specific features, it is a means of instant communication that combines the properties of several Internet services: instant messaging, a blog, e-mail and a social network [Feng, 2019].

The pragmatic features of Twitter posts are connected with the communicative strategy of expressing opinion. The main communicative task of writing in Twitter is the expression of the author’s personal position, his opinion or information that he wants to share with readers. Twitter is focused on fast response to certain events, that is why the tool of commenting is widespread: the author can share his opinion on hot news topics [Liu & Lei, 2018]. Twitter also allows its users to implement a self-representative strategy. Only by expressing oneself in communication, the virtual personality can be seen and appreciated by communication partners.

The specificity of business communication in Twitter is the actual nature of the post. In the case of a personal blog, these are comments of the author on the current news agenda, if this is a blog of an organization, the subject of messages covers topics of a political, social and business nature. The audience of the blog is abstract public, but, as a rule, the author knows the target audience and he can focus on the national, age, gender and professional affiliation of the addressee [Morikawa, 2019].

Researchers identify the following categories of Twitter profiles: personal profiles, limited to the circle of friends or acquaintances; aggregators who publish information but do not have contact with other users; informers – people who disseminate information and have contact with users [Lutzky & Gee, 2018]. In each of these types, business communication can take place. This study examined the personal profiles of public figures related to the economy and the profiles of organizations (informers).

The posts of organizations describe their current activities, draw attention to topical issues on the world agenda, or express an assessment of certain events in the world of economics and business. The message format allows to transfer its content in a compressed form and is often accompanied by images or video files. Messages are followed by hashtags, which structure the array of posts by subject [Chau, 2018]. Language compression entails an increase in the informativeness of language units and a greater degree of expressiveness.

4. DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AS A METHOD OF INVESTIGATING ONLINE DISCOURSE

Discourse analysis focuses on knowledge about language, phrase and sentence which is necessary to make communication effective. It considers the relations between social and

cultural contexts and the language. Discourse analysis examines both the use of language between participants and the effects of the use of language on social identities and relations in spoken and written texts [Schiffrin et al., 2005]. In the framework of the present study we aim to investigate relatively new form of professional communication – online business discourse.

Researchers single out such traits of online communication as the principle of speech economy, compression of word combinations, acronyms, ellipse, disregard of grammatical, syntactical and punctuation rules, misprints and spelling mistakes [Trepak, 2016]. Economic discourse in social media can be characterized by institutional nature, it is addressed to abstract group of addressees and can touch upon a variety of topics in one discussion. Dialogic nature of online communication allows the participants to interact in equal status roles.

E.g.

Time to #RevokeA50 The con that is Brexit is evident. Why risk more lie, criminality and division, Time for sovereign Parliament to do its job The only way out of mess is no Brexit. Retweet if you agree – but more TELL your Mp (even if you are unlucky and have an ERg nut job)

This example demonstrates absence of full points, abbreviations, contractions, wrong spelling. Addressing the public (*retweet if you agree*) provokes further discussion and fulfills the function of pragmatic impact.

The work has been carried out by method of discourse analysis. The organisation of action and language, values and beliefs, symbols and objects, tools and places can be built in such a way that other people recognise the speaker as a particular type of identity that is correlated with a particular type of activity. In this case one can speak about a discourse. J.P. Gee divides the tools of discourse inquiry analysis into four steps as follows [Gee, 2011, pp. 37]:

a. Discourses: how humans build activities and identities through other aspects beside language.

b. Social languages: how humans use different styles or of language variations for different purposes to recognise different identities in different settings.

c. Conversations: how humans talk or write something that does not only relate to someone else's words but also relates to themes, debates, or motives that have been the focus of much talk and writing in some social group.

d. Intertextuality: the words of a human relate to other texts that someone has written or said [Ibidem, pp. 28-29].

Representatives of contemporary critical discourse analysis are exploring ways of speech influence that allow the authorities to exercise their domination in society. Experts seek to find out exactly how social, gender, racial or ethnic inequality is realized with the help of communication. The material for critical discourse analysis usually includes political texts reflecting the inequality of communicants. The definition of "critical" is used in such studies in order to emphasize the connections between language, power and ideology usually hidden for non-specialists. A detailed study of the texts helps to identify the implicitly expressed unconscious attitudes of the communicants and to show the results of the impact of the discourse on the perception of information [Budaev, 2016].

Functional-pragmatic analysis allows to take into account the role of extralinguistic components, e.g. the conditions of speech production, the speaker's belonging to a particular social group, the position held by the speaker, political views, etc. [Ponomarenko, 2018]. This method involves identifying the communicative goal of the utterance, determining speech means for achieving this goal, identification of communicative strategies (global intention) and communicative tactics (means of its implementation), associated with the concept of the single market.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The category of assessment has been a matter of contemplation in linguistics for quite a long period of time. There are several approaches to the problem: evaluative component within the semantic structure of word; evaluation as the essential feature of subjective modality [Telia, 1986].

The denotational component of lexical meaning is the part of lexical meaning which establishes correlation between the name and the object.

Evaluation as a semantic constituent is to be found in the connotation component of lexical meaning, the latter being the part of meaning which reflects the attitude of the speaker towards what he speaks about and some additional information in the process of communication [Ibidem].

As for evaluation as the inherent feature of evaluative modality, V. Telia notes that the latter is “the connection established between the evaluative orientation of the speaker (listener) and the denoted realia that is positively or negatively qualified on emotional, aesthetic or some other basis in line with the standard state of things in a certain worldview underlying evaluation” [Ibidem, pp. 22-23].

The evaluative constituent is of a high pragmatic value since it serves to reinforce the speech impact and the persuasive effect.

The role of evaluation from the point of view of its impact potential lies in giving the speaker an opportunity to either mitigate and euphemise the utterance or make it more imperative and categorical.

The analysis of empirical material has shown the majority of comments about European single market were negative. The reason can be that these were the comments to the tweet of European Commission justifying the benefits of single market.

In the following example (1) the author stresses the impact of single market on housing prices. The tactic of assessment is applied with the help of opposition “increase prices – low wages”.

The single market has increased house prices and kept wages low through open borders.

In another example of negative assessment (2) the author uses rhetorical questions to doubt the competence of the EC using emotionally coloured word combination (obvious failure).

For how much longer will the European Commission be able to support the single market and the associated “Euro” in the face of the obvious failures of the “Euro” in coping with localised inflation/deflation?

Example (3) uses the communicative step of concession. The writer first agrees with the author of the post that the single market is a good thing, but makes a limitation – not always.

The single market is a good thing; but not at all costs.

In the comment of a Romanian citizen (4) the author expresses his negative attitude through denial of the of single market benefits in this country. The combination of two adjectives maximizes the high degree of assessment (bleak absolute poverty).

Nothing like Romania. That’s bleak absolute poverty. The great EU single market benefits seems to have passed them by.

Example (5) provides a categorical assessment without any arguments and looks groundless. The author uses contractions (ths) and disregard of spelling rules (eu).

ths single market is a disaster since it allows open borders. eu must fall.

Example (6) provides cautious negative assessment of single market with vague marker (we are not certain). The metaphor “single market is power sharing” is used to draw a more categorical conclusion.

Well we are not certain if the single Market is the beating heart. It seems nowadays more like the Old powersharing between Berlin and Paris. Nothing single market about that.

In example (7) single market is animated with the help of conditional sentence. The comparison produces an awkward effect.

If I was the EU I would be stressing how the single market is Margaret Thatcher’s great legacy.

Example (8) is marked by full absence of punctuation marks. In spite of this the negative attitude is evident from the usage of nouns (burden), adjectives (negative consequence, small number). The author refers to the same notion in the form of abbreviation and a full word (small and medium size companies).

The single market is a burden for many small&medium size companies and local markets over the years a concentration process can be observed accompanied by many negative consequences for the SMEs and the local markets a small number of big players is dominating Europe

Positive comments regard the single market concept as a fundamental phenomenon unifying economic processes in the member states.

In example (9) the strategy of explanation is used to describe the benefits of single market. Repetition (free movement) highlights the advantages of this principle.

The single market is about the free movement of goods (they “travel”). There is also the free movement of people, that allows people to work everywhere and that was rare before the EU. Also, before, a lot of people needed visas for other countries.

Example (10) demonstrates the attitudes of non-EU members to the issue of single market. Positive assessment tactic can be combined with other speech tactics. The tactic of assessment is combined with the tactic of irony. The author uses exclamation and negative-interrogative sentence to express reproach about their right to trade with member states freely.

Nice of you to forget Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein. Of course, you wouldn’t want people to know that non-EU members can participate in the single market would you?

A similar attitude is demonstrated in the following example (11). Conservative MP George Freeman’s tweet asks “When did it become UnConservative to believe in the #SingleMarket?” [George Freeman, 2019] and reminds of M. Thatcher’s enthusiasm for this principle. In one of the replies the commentator uses the tactic of irony:

Good on you, George. Anyone that doesn't see the benefits of the single market: a) doesn't understand it or b) owns a hedge fund.

In the following excerpt (12) the positive assessment of the single market is associated with the identity of the British market with European market. Personal pronoun *our* is used twice to highlight unity of two entities.

astonishing how few people really understand practically what it means: the whole of Europe is legally our domestic market; not just no import levies, customs checks

or documents but the right to trade anywhere on equal terms. Leaving means cutting off 85% of our home market.

Some of the comments express neutral attitude to the single market (13). In addition, they stress political disunity in the European Union.

There is nothing wrong with the single market. If only we could go back to that situation. It's the political stuff that has now taken over that leavers object to

6. CONCLUSION

The study made it possible to observe the attitude of social network users to current economic and social processes taking place in modern Europe. The discourse about the single market raises such pressing issues as the political, commercial and customs unity of the European Union, as well as the problems of social order and migration. Posts from real users – economists, politicians and ordinary people – indicate a contradictory image of the single market in the collective linguacultural consciousness of Europeans. Various functional and pragmatic speech tools indicate this. On the one hand, the single market has obvious advantages for the member states, on the other hand, the UK has a fairly strong economy capable of operating independently. Giving an assessment of the political foundations of a single market, Twitter users also emphasize the country's desire for political independence from the EU.

Speech tactics of assessment, respectively, can be divided into those demonstrating a positive attitude and a negative attitude, doubt, scepticism. The second type prevails, which testifies not so much to the condemnation of the single market, but to the ambiguous attitude towards its prospects. From a functional point of view, assessment tactics perform two main functions – expressing an opinion about a problem and expressing an attitude. Further research may involve other means of expressing pragmatics of online discourse and classification of its registers in the aspect of professional communication.

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