

Alesia SHEVTSOVA
(Minsk State Linguistic University)

Lexical Stylistic Means in English and Belarusian Radio Discussions

Summary

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The present article deals with research results of the lexical stylistic means that favour the verbalization of the main communicative strategies and tactics both on the part of hosts and guests of radio discussions. The participants of British radio discussions prefer using the tactics that influence addressees and that are based on the emotional expressive level of vocabulary. The discussions of the Belarusian radio contain more lexical stylistic means in total and more phraseological units and metonymy as compared with the British discussions, that testifies to a more active verbal pressure through using figurative lexical means. Colloquial words that are used by British and Belarusian participants reduce the distance between speakers and listeners. Special (professional, scientific) words make speech more exact and detailed about the question discussed that is approved by the listening audience. The hosts and guests of both Belarusian and British radio discussions try to catch and keep the listeners' attention that is realized through using in their speech a number of lexical stylistic means as well.

Key words: lexical stylistic means, communicative strategies and tactics, expressive words, emotivity, colloquial words

Резюме

Лексико-стилистические средства в радиодискуссиях на английском и белорусском языках

В данной статье излагаются результаты исследования лексико-стилистических средств, способствующих реализации основных коммуникативных стратегий и тактик, как со стороны ведущих, так и гостей радиодискуссий. Участники британских дискуссий предпочитают тактики воздействия, основанные на эмоционально-экспрессивном уровне лексики. Больше общее количество лексико-стилистических средств в дискуссиях белорусского радио, более высокая частотность использования фразеологических сочетаний и метонимий по сравнению с британскими передачами говорит о более активном воздействии посредством использования образно-художественных

средств по сравнению с британцами. Разговорно-бытовая лексика, имеющая место в речи белорусских и британских участников радиодискуссий, сближает говорящего со слушателями, а специальная лексика, придающая речи выступающего точность, осведомлённость в обсуждаемом вопросе вызывает одобрение со стороны слушательской аудитории. Ведущие и гости дискуссий на обоих языках стараются привлечь и удерживать внимание публики, чему также способствует ряд лексико-стилистических средств.

Ключевые слова: *лексико-стилистические средства, коммуникативные стратегии и тактики, экспрессивная лексика, эмотивность, разговорная лексика*

The topicality of oral media discourse research, including the discourse of radio discussions, is conditioned by a scanty state of knowledge about certain pragmatic aspects of communication, in particular, the use of some communicative tactics of affecting the addressee that are realized through different linguistic means. The article deals with the analysis of the lexical stylistic means that contribute to the realization of the strategies and tactics used by radio discussions participants. The important role of these lexical stylistic means is determined by some special characteristics of radio discourse – mediation, no imaging, mass audience, instantaneous character, linearity, continuity [Нестрепова 2009: 37–41].

We have identified the most frequent lexical and stylistic devices in English and Belarusian radio discussions and their role in the realization of key communication strategies (the strategies of self-presentation, drawing attention, persuasion, and motivation). We have studied 50 British and 50 Belarusian radio broadcasts.

The analysis has shown that invited guests attempt to influence the opinion of the audience (the addressee) to the same degree with a host, choosing different strategies of the communicative impact under specific pragmatic conditions. Thus we understand a communicative influence as an impact on the recipient's knowledge, attitude, and intentions in the right direction for the addressee. Since we talk about the radio discussion, we will consider the term "communicative impact" as the impact through the use of verbal (speech) means. The speech impact in the narrow sense is usually used in the field of coordinative relations, when communicants are in the relation of equitable cooperation, not subordination [Исеев 2008]. The speech impact in this case suggests that it regulates the activity of another person, who to some extent is free to act and acts in accordance with their needs. This speech influence is typical of the media [ibid.]. The

participants of British and Belarusian radio discussions produce both an intentional (request, persuasion, blandishments) and unconscious impact on listeners (self-presentation and identification). Having identified the semantic structure of the radio discussions, we came to the conclusion that the vast majority of the strategies and tactics are focused in three prototypical structural components – *the portrait of the guest, setting, and discussing the problem.*

The semantic component *the portrait of the guest* is partially presented at the beginning of the program, when the host introduces the guest of the studio to listeners. However, a complete picture of the guest is created during the discussion of the problem, aided by the strategy of self-presentation, realized through such tactics as reasoning, identification, and engaging the listener in a dialogue, repetition, and emphasis. The use of various lexical and stylistic means (see Table 1) favours the linguistic realization of these tactics. For example, the implementation of reasoning tactics through the use of comparisons, which are equally common in both Belarusian and British radio discussions: *To lose your children after the divorce it's the same as somebody had taken away your parents and killed them; Talking about anti-aging products now is like if you would say the world "Google" in 1970.*

Table 1

Basic lexical stylistic means used in Belarusian and British radio discussions

| Lexical stylistic means | Absolute frequency of use in 50 Belarusian discussions | Relative frequency of use in 50 Belarusian discussions | Lexical stylistic means | Absolute frequency of use in 50 British discussions | Relative frequency of use in 50 British discussions |
|-----------------------------|--|--|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Epithet | 630 | 31.5% | Epithet | 642 | 33.6% |
| Metaphor | 565 | 28.3% | Metaphor | 510 | 26.7% |
| Pleonasm and tautology | 362 | 18.1% | Pleonasm and tautology | 316 | 16.4% |
| Phraseological combinations | 147 | 7.4% | Interjection | 168 | 8.8% |

Sequel to Table 1 see on p. 206

Sequel to Table 1

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|--------------|------|------|-----------------------------|------|------|
| Periphrasis | 105 | 5.3% | Phraseological combinations | 103 | 5.4% |
| Metonymy | 76 | 3.8% | Periphrasis | 65 | 3.4% |
| Comparison | 55 | 2.8% | Comparison | 54 | 2.8% |
| Interjection | 33 | 1.6% | Metonymy | 20 | 1% |
| Antithesis | 15 | 0.7% | Dysphemism | 11 | 0.6% |
| Euphemism | 10 | 0.3% | Antithesis / Euphemism | 10 | 0.5% |
| Total | 1998 | 100% | Total | 1909 | 100% |

The guests of the British radio discussions try to reduce the distance with interlocutors and listeners, using the *tactics of appealing to the emotions*, which is aimed at the emotional impact for the purpose of real or virtual audience engagement in the dialogue. The study has shown that the British radio discussions are characterized by a wider range of stylistic devices based on the interaction of subject-logical and emotional values. In other words, the emotional expressive level of British participants' speech is higher. This is evidenced by a significantly greater number of interjections as compared to the Belarusian discussions, which are a signal of emotionally intensive intervals of statements. For example: *Oh, how fun is that! Wow, that's cool!* Dysphemisms that are practically absent in the Belarusian discussions have been identified in the British broadcasts (0.6%). For example: *What piece of advice I carried with me? "Don't talk shit". You know, don't talk nonsense.* British participants often joke and make compliments to their interlocutors (*I'm not a celebrity, Daily Bacon is a celebrity – Daily Bacon is the host of the program*), use conversational and expressive lexical units (*a damn thing, I wanna, what's up?*). The features mentioned above are consistent with the accepted view in the literature on speech emotiveness of the British.

In the Belarusian radio discussions the dominant stylistic devices are those based on the interaction of lexical and contextual object-logical values. As shown in Table 1, the Belarusians more frequently than the British use metaphors, phraseological combinations, metonymy, and paraphrases. The participants of the Belarusian radio discussions try to describe the facts of reality figuratively, creating a sensual, visually more tangible picture of the described phenomena. For example: *Гэта вот шматслоўе*

становіцца такім вось рытарычным *Ла-Маншам*, якое трохкі разгрэбці і няма нічога (*This great number of words becomes a kind of rhetorical La Manche, which is a little raked and there is nothing – metaphor*).

It should be noted that with the same number of euphemisms found, in our opinion, the above mentioned language means in the Belarusian participants' speech seem more imaginative, an original representation of reality. For example, when a talk comes to the question of death, both Belarusian and British guests prefer not to call a spade a spade. In the speech of the Belarusian participants, for example, you can find an expression such as “*кронка фізічнага існавання ўжо настаялена*” (*the point of physical existence has already been set*). The British tend to say more “materially-minded”: *to go to finish; I thought I couldn't go on* (about suicide). This tactics of behavior is also a part of the self-presentation strategy with the main aim – to create a positive image of the speaker in the eyes of the audience and interlocutors.

The absence of dysphemisms in the speech of Belarusian guests is compensated for by colloquial and everyday vernacular vocabulary, which in the discussions of the Belarusian radio has a slightly greater frequency of use (3.4% vs. 2.6%) (see Table 2). For example: *Гэта ж трэба мець спецыяльную адукацыю, дзеля таго, каб разабрацца. Я ні халеры не зразумеў!* (*You must have a special education to understand it. I did not understand a damn thing!*). The guests of the Belarusian radio discussions compared to the British more frequently resort to the use of special vocabulary (4.5% vs. 2.4%). For example: *Гэта сапраўды адзінкі такіх рэчаў, якія сталі дамінантай экспазіцыйнага рашэння* (*There are in fact single things that have become the dominant of the exposition solution*).

Table 2

The main functional and stylistic types of vocabulary in the Belarusian and British radio discussions

| Functional and stylistic type of vocabulary | Frequency of use in 50 Belarusian discussions | Frequency of use in 50 British discussions |
|---|---|--|
| Commonly used vocabulary | 91.3% | 95.4% |
| Conversational, vernacular vocabulary | 3.4% | 2.6% |
| Jargon, slang | 0.8% | 0.6% |
| Special vocabulary | 4.5% | 2.4% |

To draw the listeners' attention and to sound convincing, the guests of both the Belarusian and British radio discussions use the tactics of repetition that is linguistically realized through pleonasm and tautology, periphrasis. For example: *Ён (М. Багдановіч) паказвае прыклад усім нам, як патрэбна адносіцца да Радзімы: сваім прыкладам, сваімі ўчынкамі, сваёй працай* (He shows an example to us all how one should treat their Motherland: by his example, by his deeds, by his work); *These thoughts went through my mind ... combination of these thoughts and feelings*. The use of pleonasm and tautology also adds some expression and spontaneity: *Жарэз Алфёраў падказвае і гаворыць, сцвярджае, што <...>* (Zharez Alferav suggest and says, states that <...>).

The use of phraseological combinations by the guests contributes to the implementation of tactics of identification, such as *the cultural identification* and *the identification with the conventional wisdom*. The Belarusian radio discussions participants more often than the British reinforce their opinion by phraseological combinations, which act as widely recognized, allegedly identifying their opinion with that of all members of the cultural community. The speakers identify themselves with the cultural patterns of the society. For example: *Не скажаш, што пакаленне, дапусцім, стала горшае. Гэта так звыкла сёння пакетаць: "Уй, дрэннае пакаленне, неўдзячнае!" Не, час мяняецца, людзі застаюцца <...>* (I cannot say that the generation has become worse. Today they usually say: "Oh, This generation is bad, ungrateful!" No, time is changing, people are left <...>).

The comparison of the British and Belarusian radio hosts' communication styles makes it possible to characterize the British ethnic style as more emotive, individualistic, with the growth of the personal origin and unimpositive, i.e. intolerant to provide a direct impact on the communicative companion [Ларина 2009]. The British radio host almost always gives his personal view of a problem (*As I see it; I'm more interested in...*). Impersonal sentences without addressee dominate in the speech of the Belarusian hosts (*Хацелася б пачуць вашу думку наконт таго... – It would be nice to hear your opinion...*). Some researches in ethnolinguistics [Ларина 2009; Стернин, Ларина 2003] found that the English communication is more emotive as compared to the Russian or Belarusian communication. The British hosts are more likely to overestimate the guests of the program and resort to many emotionally laden lexical items (*Today we have another marvelous Monday... and today... we have a fabulous individual and she*

has quite an extensive background). Thus the British radio hosts lend the communicative support to their interlocutors. The British prefer the tactics of assumptions and intensification of emotivity. The frequent use of epithets, metaphors, interjections, metonymy, antitheses (see Table 1) contributes to the implementation of this basic communicative behavior of the BBC radio hosts: *That sings a very confident thing for a young man to do* (epithet); *As if you don't know about human body, even know its ... most generic warmth. We are electricity and water (=generate energy)* (metaphor).

The Belarusian ethnic style, by contrast, is characterized as more straight, neutral, calm, intolerable to uncertainty. Within the strategies of motivation and drawing attention the Belarusian hosts more often than their British colleagues resort to the tactics of appeal to additional information and request. These communicative strategies are realized through using verbal clichés and stamps, special vocabulary. For example: *Як адзначаюць спецыялісты, мы маем аўтаномнае прамыслова-культурнае кальцо <...>* (*As the specialists note, we have an autonomous industrial cultural ring*).

So, the lexical stylistic means described above favour the realization of basic communication strategies and tactics both on the part of hosts and guests of the radio programs under research. The participants of the British radio discussions prefer the influence tactics based on the emotional and expressive level of vocabulary (e.g. the tactics of appeal to the emotions, the use of emotionally loaded lexical items) that indicate a greater degree of British participants speech emotivity as compared to the Belarusians. The British and Belarusian hosts and guests equally use “image-art facilities” – metaphors, epithets, antithesis, euphemisms. However, the greater total number of lexical and stylistic means in the Belarusian radio discussions, a higher frequency of phraseological combination and metonymy use compared to the UK radio programs indicate a more active influence through the use of figurative art means compared to the British. Colloquial vocabulary that is present in the speech of both the British and Belarusian discussions participants makes the speaker closer to the listener. Panelists in both languages are trying to attract and hold public attention, as well as sound natural and easy, which is undoubtedly achieved by the use of certain lexical and stylistic means (repetition and pleonasm, metaphors, epithets, metaphors, metonymy, periphrasis, comparison).

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