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Role repertoire of the family discourse participants in a situation of frank communication: symmetric and asymmetric relations

Šeimos diskurso dalyvių vaidmenų repertuaras atviro bendravimo situacijoje: simetriniai ir asimetriniai santykiai

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Abstract

The article deals with the communicative situation of frank communication in the English family discourse from the point of view of the role repertoire of its participants. The role repertoire and addresser-addressee configuration of interactants of the English family discourse “HUSBAND-WIFE” affects the choice of communicative strategies and tactics, and the classification of roles is considered from the standpoint of symmetric/asymmetric relations of the speakers. The tactics of self-approval, overloading the perceiver with information, playing on feelings, self-expression, and the use of flattery embody the strategy of frankness. The family communication is studied on the material of the English-language discourse, which is represented by works of fiction, with the involvement of general scientific, structural-semantic, pragma-semantic, discursive, and quantitative methods. The proposed algorithm for analysing the family discourse is a complex of four stages. At the first stage, we identify the types of roles of participants regarding social relations and the context of works of fiction; at the second stage, we define the characteristic strategies and tactics of the family communication; at the third stage, we examine the structural-semantic and communicative-pragmatic means of implementing strategies and tactics; and the fourth stage is dedicated to establishing the peculiarities of speech influence implementation in situations of family communication.

KEYWORDS: English family discourse, role repertoire, addresser-addressee configuration “HUSBAND-WIFE”, communicative situation, frank communication.

Introduction

A human being is a biosocial being. This means that he/she has not only psychophysical and mental qualities, such as properties of the nervous system, temperament, individual

psychological features of thinking, perception, but also characteristics determined by social parameters, interpersonal relationships, position in the society and his/her attitude toward the social phenomena. A person's social life resembles a theatrical performance. William Shakespeare noticed the similarity of a person's performance of various social functions to the theatrical roles. That is why sociologists introduced the term of the social role, having borrowed it from the theatrical terminology (Tannen, 2002). A socialised personality is always the bearer of a certain arsenal of roles: professional, family, sexual, etc. Roles are closely interwoven into the structure of the personality. A significant part of the disharmony is related to the functioning of roles and patterns of the role behaviour (Grydasova, 2016). In the process of socialisation, a certain life model is formed in a person: a system of stable meaningful relationships, behavioural stereotypes, patterns, and a hierarchy of habitual activities. A life model necessarily includes a repertoire of roles. Roles as functional units of human social behaviour are basic social functions of an individual. They are the embodiment of the purpose of socially significant activity and behaviour of a person, and therefore, they are very close to the meaning of life.

A person can play similar roles in different groups. In this case, one speaks of a dominant role or a desire for the identity of divergent social roles in different communication groups (Dahrendorf, 1965, p. 41). In each group, a person can play several roles, but in the same group, one role is always the main one. Other roles are secondary; they are mostly related to microgroups, groupings, subgroups formed within a group. In the family, a person also plays certain roles.

According to Grydasova (2016), family roles are the result of overlapping and syncretism of various roles (hierarchical, psychological, and initiative) performed by family members, which have their own speech expressions in the sphere of the family communication. In order to understand the role communication of the English-speaking family members, one should apply the interactive theory of roles. According to it, the patterns of behaviour that make up the roles appear primarily and periodically from the dynamics of interaction, and the reason for the emergence of statuses and positions is the need to distribute roles within social and organisational boundaries (Bigari, 2006, p. 48). We consider the distribution of roles among the family members from the perspective of symmetric/asymmetric relations between speakers for a more in-depth study of the linguistic features of communication between the interlocutors. By symmetric relations, we mean relations between members of an English-speaking family that assume status-role equality; and by asymmetric relations, we refer to relations of dominance or subordination between communicators. Analysis of the discursive fragments of communication between members of an English-speaking family allows us to summarise the roles of participants and their configuration: a person-speaker in a social group at any moment of time performs a role of Head, Subordinate or Partner. People with different degrees of readiness can move from one state to another.

Theoretical Background

Family communication is a status-fixed interaction, which is contrasted on the basis of the status in the relations of communicators with a descending and ascending status vector. The dynamics of status relations between the addresser and the addressee represents a certain line of communication that overlaps the line of topic development, and speech is the most important characteristic of a person's social status (Wodak, 2013). The manifestation of dominance/subordination and equality in the English-speaking family communication is realized explicitly and implicitly at the lexical and grammatical levels.

The linguists focused on different aspects of family interaction. Bigari (2006) investigated the family discourse, as far as its peculiarities in the situation of modern family formation changes were concerned. Grydasova (2016) touched upon the status and positional roles in the family. Kozlova (2012) analysed a parental discourse. Yakuba (2006) described language means of expressing matrimonial status changes in the English literary prose. The researchers also put emphasis on the child discourse (Maas & Abbeduto, 2001; Kuratzis & Cook-Gumperz, 2015) and interaction between siblings (Soloshchuk & Zvereva, 2010). While the language behaviour of family members is mainly studied, the types of interaction in the family are less explored, in particular, in frank communication. This article attempts to fill the gap.

The aim of the research is to establish the tactics of the speech influence and the means of their implementation in the situation of frank communication in the family discourse according to the addresser-addressee

configuration “HUSBAND-WIFE” and the type of symmetric/asymmetric relations of interactants. The subject area of the research is the English family discourse, and its specific topic is structural-semantic and pragma-discursive characteristics of the situation of frank communication in the light of the role repertoire of the participants. In this article, we refer to the English family discourse in terms of “the English language discourse” or “English-speaking family discourse”. The research material covers more than 2000 discursive fragments that are microdialogues of communication among family members that often have strategies and tactics of manipulative influence. They were randomly selected from literary works of the English-speaking authors of the 20th and 21st centuries.

A literary dialogue – a dialogue in prose and drama – represents an authoritative model of a real interaction. Following Lakoff (2001), “[i]t is certainly not equivalent to the dialogue that is spontaneously produced in the interaction. But, as paradoxical as it sounds, the dialogue in drama and prose is perceived by the reader as a real one” (Lakoff, 2001). A literary dialogue frees the raw material of a real dialogue from that one which has no value for communication (Tannen, 2015). This makes it possible to rely on a literary dialogue as an analogue of a real communication, that is, varieties of an artistic literary dialogue are compared with a real dialogue (Bezuga, 2017).

The research is methodologically based on the achievements of linguists in the field of discourse studies (Belova, 2004; Blum-Kulka & Hamo, 2011; van Dijk, 2015; Jung, 2005; Tannen et al., 2015; Wodak, 2013), linguistic pragmatics (Bezuga, 2017; Carston, 2002; Frolova, 2019; Shevchenko & Morozova, 2005; Grice, 1975; Tannen, 2002), logical semantics (Frege, 1980), theory of speech acts (Austin, 1975; Grewendorf & Meggle, 2012), and theories of speech influence (Rizun et al., 2005) and non-verbal communication (Soloshchuk, 2011). The pragma-discursive paradigm of linguistic knowledge is chosen as the theoretical basis of the study (Batsevich, 2019; Bezuga, 2017; Martyniuk, 2017; Morozova, 2017; Shevchenko & Morozova, 2005).

The scientific novelty of the paper lies in the fact that (a) communicative signs of the situation of frank communication in the English family discourse are determined in it; (b) frank communication in the family and the tactics of implementing strategies in the researched communicative situation are clarified; (c) the means of implementing the role repertoire of the participants of the English family discourse in the situation of frank communication are established.

Methodology

The methodical algorithm for researching the specifics of the English family discourse includes certain stages, at each of which the tasks are solved using the integration of general scientific methods (observation and comparison, deduction and induction, generalisation and specification, analysis and synthesis) and about 20 methods and approaches of conversational and pragma-discursive direction.

- ◆ *Establishment of sampling criteria, collection of topical material, formation of an array of empirical research material.* The analysis of the discourse of the family communication includes the study of certain discursive fragments of communication between members of the English-speaking family. In the present study, it was decided that when defining the general amount, the entire corpus of discursive fragments should constitute a homogeneous mass of material in relation to the studied units. The main principles of work homogeneity include the following requirements: (1) the discursive fragments that make up the general amount represent only communication between members of an English-speaking (British or American) family; (2) the source of discursive fragments is works of art (novels and plays) by English-speaking authors; (3) time limitations: literary works, the examples of which constitute the general amount, belong to the creations of the 20th and 21st centuries.

In order to ensure the statistical homogeneity of the sample for spreading the established patterns to the entire general amount, its organisation was carried out by the method of random selection. Moreover, the volume of discursive fragments of the general amount is the maximum possible from the point of view of the practical use.

Based on the experience of linguistic statistical research, which is mainly based on 90–95% confidence probability, i.e., allowing a 5–10% relative error of the studied statistical regularity (Levitskii, 2007), we take

a sample size of the order of two thousand discursive fragments of communication between members of an English-speaking family. To specify the relative error of our research, we use the formula:

$$\delta = \frac{K}{\sqrt{N \times p}},$$

where K is a certain constant, N is a sample volume, p is the frequency of the studied unit.

What is denoted by the symbol K is nothing more than a fiducial probability. Usually, 0.05 is taken as the minimum level of significance; this level corresponds to a probability of 1.96. Therefore, K in the given formula is equal to 1.96. Thus, we determine the relative error according to the scheme:

- a we calculate the frequency of use of the unit according to the formula $p = \frac{x}{X}$, where x is the number of discursive fragments, and X is the total number of the pages.

$$p = \frac{2136}{9000} = 0.237.$$

- b we find the relative error of our research

$$\delta = \frac{1.96}{\sqrt{9000 \times 0.237}} = \frac{1.96}{\sqrt{2133}} = \frac{1.96}{46} = 0.04.$$

Therefore, the relative error in the presented study can be 4%.

- *Inductive generalisation of the collected language material, formulation of the research hypothesis.* The discourse of family communication is a communicative interaction of speakers related by family (marriage or blood) ties, characterised by dialogicity, addressability, situationality, spontaneity, everydayness and informality.
- *Clarification of the hypothesis.* The theoretical literature about methodological concepts of modern pragma-linguistics is studied. The facts revealed in the discursive analysis are compared with the results of other researchers.
- *Deductive analysis of the English family discourse.* The number of individual language facts is infinite; therefore, the collection of all facts is a fundamentally insoluble task and cannot be the ultimate goal of the research. The deductive method, as a starting point, involves entities based on certain assumptions and verification of the reality of these entities, their correspondence (or non-compliance) with the investigated facts (Yermolenko, 1999). In our study, the deductive method ensured the identification and comparison of specific features, functional characteristics, which are inherent directly to the discourse of the English family communication.
- *Systematization of the obtained data:* establishment of the main features of the discourse of the English family communication, generalization of the role repertoire of interactants, analysis of tactics and strategies of the speech influence, identification of structural-semantic and communicative-pragmatic features of the presented type of the discourse.

Results and Discussion

Peculiarities of the implementation of speech influence in the communicative situation of frank communication of the English-speaking family discourse depend on symmetrical/asymmetrical relations of interactants. We define frank communication in the family as an interchange of thoughts, opinions, and information *io_o pqdo _oc hpodt ux _zj*. We define the symmetrical relations as the relations between communicators – members of the family that provide the status-role equality and compliance with the basic conventions of the communication (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Grice, 1975), while the asymmetrical relations refer to the relationship of the dominance or subordination between communicators.

Symmetrical Partnership Relations

Communication, constantly permeating a person's life, has an extremely large number of manifestations, one of which is communication in the family (Shkitska, 2012, p. 67). In the discourse of the family communication,

the issue of revealing secrets is extremely important. We understand the communicative situation of frank communication in the English family discourse as a model of the interaction of family members with the dominance of the frankness strategy, which is implemented by discursive tactics aimed at exposing the secrets and secret feelings of the participants of the communication, according to their symmetrical/asymmetrical relations. In the presented communicative situation, the motives of interaction, the goals of speech actions, the roles of interlocutors, as well as those speech actions that can be used to express the attitude of one communication participant to another are reflected. Disclosure of communicative intentions is reflected in strategies or tactics of frankness (Lutz, 1990).

In the situation of frank communication with addresser-addressee configuration “HUSBAND-WIFE” and symmetrical partnership relations of speakers (PARTNERS’ position), the strategy of frankness is realised by the tactics of self-expression (see Examples 1–7) and use of flattery (see Examples 8–10). The structural and semantic structure of the given communicative situation (a sample of 614 discursive fragments) is presented as follows.

- 1 Negative constructions (17%). The coincidence of the roles of the husband and the wife in the communicative situation of frank communication is not a conflict, if both partners are satisfied with the given roles.

Ex 1 *‘I love you, Gill.’*

‘Don’t,’ she said drawing back. ‘You mustn’t say things like that.’

‘I know I shouldn’t, but it’s true,’ he said, his face wet with tears. I’ve never stopped loving you. Through all the bad times, all the grief and heartache I gave you, I always loved you... I always will.’

‘I feel the same, but there’s no future for us now’ (Evans, 1998, p. 112).

In Example 1, both speakers have the position of PARTNERS, as they understand the impossibility of further living together, although love is not dead yet. The compound sentence of an egocentric nature with a modal verb of obligation and an objection from the male communicator “*I know I shouldn’t, but it’s true*” and the compound sentence with a negative construction on the part of the speaker-wife “*I feel the same, but there’s no future for us now*” precisely emphasise their role status and embody the tactics of self-expression.

- 2 Interrogative constructions (32%)

- a General questions with modal verbs of possibility

Ex 2 *She stubbed out the cigarette and leaned sideways to kiss his cheek. He pulled her closer and she laid her head on his chest.*

‘Shh,’ she said, ‘I didn’t mean to wake you.’

‘Yes you did,’ he said, drowsily.

‘Well, are you awake now or what?’ she asked.

‘If I say “or what”, does that mean I can go back to sleep?’

‘No.’

‘I’m awake then.’

‘I’ve been thinking,’ she said, smiling already at the expected response... ‘I was remembering our first night together – it was raining like this, do you remember?’

‘No. I can’t say that I do. All I remember is thinking – I hope she’s not like her snotty friends ... Can I go back to sleep now please?’

‘One more thing.’ Kitty raised her head.

He bent his head down to kiss her forehead.

‘Yes. I love you,’ he said. ‘Now, go to sleep’ (O’Riordan, 1995, p. 56).

To achieve a certain perlocutionary effect, speakers use self-expression as a tactic of the frankness strategy. In **Example 2**, the addresser wakes up the male addressee by non-verbal means *“She stubbed out the cigarette and leaned sideways to kiss his cheek”*, and then deceives him, as if she did not want to do it *“I didn’t mean to wake you”*. Tactics are embodied in interrogative sentences: *“are you awake now or what?”*, *“do you remember?”* from the wife’s side and *“If I say ‘or what’, does that mean I can go back to sleep?”*, *“Can I go back to sleep now please?”* from the husband’s side. A female communicator tries to use manipulation to hear frankness from a man – a declaration of love, and as a result of using the tactics of self-expression, she achieves her goal: *“I love you”*.

b Rhetorical questions

Ex 3 *‘You’re a witch, Alice Hartley. Do you know how much joy it gives me to call you that – Alice Hartley, I mean, not witch, even though you are’ (Howard, 2003, p. 378).*

A discursive fragment (**Example 3**) illustrating the communication of PARTNERS contains an address using the full name *“Alice Hartley”* (2 times) by the speaker. The speaker himself explicitly explains with the help of a rhetorical interrogative sentence why he addresses the addressee in this way: *“Do you know how much joy it gives me to call you that – Alice Hartley”*, since the tradition of a woman taking her husband’s surname is a common phenomenon in the English-speaking society. Addressing his wife by her first name and her new surname, the husband implements self-expression tactics and proves again and again to himself and his wife that they are already a married couple.

c Constructions with reminder verbs

Ex 4 *How can I do this? he thought. He made himself an unusually tall Scotch and sat down near her. ‘Honey, I gotta talk to you.’*

‘Sure. Is something wrong?’ She put her book down.

‘Well, sort of. Yes.’ He lowered his head.

Sheila was suddenly frightened... ‘Bob,’ she said with candor, ‘something in your voice scares me. Have I done anything?’

‘No. It’s me. I’ve done it.’ Bob took a breath. He was shaking. ‘Sheila, remember when you were pregnant with Paula?’

‘Yes?’

‘I had to fly to Europe – Montpellier – to give that paper...’

‘And...?’

‘I had an affair.’ He said it as quickly as he could. Like ripping off a bandage fast, to cause less pain.

Sheila’s face went ashen. ‘No,’ she said, shaking her head violently as if to drive out what she had just heard. ‘This is some terrible joke.’ She looked at him for reassurance. ‘Isn’t it?’

‘No. It’s true,’ he said tonelessly. ‘I – I’m sorry’ (Segal, 1980, p. 193).

At the time when the communicator-PARTNER himself wants to reveal his secrets as in **Example 4**, he thinks for a long time about *“How can I do this?”*, sometimes prepares a speech, if the secret is not very pleasant, he tries to say it as soon as possible. In a situation where the addresser-husband wants to tell the addressee-wife that he once cheated on her, he utters his innermost secret very quickly, as if thinking that in this way he will reduce the pain of the other communicator by quickly saying – *“He said it as quickly as he could. Like ripping*

off a bandage fast, to cause less pain". The tactic of implementing the strategy in this case is self-expression: (1) offering a conversation using the affectionate word "*Honey, I gotta talk to you*"; (2) a reminder of the past in the form of an interrogative sentence "*Sheila, remember when you were pregnant with Paula?*" and the declarative affirmative sentence "*I had to fly to Europe – Montpellier – to give that paper*"; (3) revealing a secret "*I had an affair*"; 4) a confirmation of an unpleasant (for an addressee) action "*No. It's true*".

3 Affirmative constructions (51%)

a Elliptical structures

Ex 5 *'You and Gill,' muttered Carol.*

'Nothing's going on between us,' said Gill. 'I promise you... I swear to you on my mother's life that I really did go to Gill's to ask her to help me in a surprise I'm planning for you,' Arnie said. 'She's agreed to look after Donna while I take you away for a weekend just the two of us.' In a bizarre attempt to sound positive in a hopeless situation, he added, 'As soon as you get out of here we'll be off, just the two of us, for a weekend of self-indulgence.'

Carol managed a smile, more evident in her eyes than her mouth, which was too sore to move more than a fraction. 'You and Gill,' she said again.

'There's nothing going on,' he told her again (Evans, 1998, p. 186).

Example 5, which illustrates the communicative situation of frank communication with the partnership relations of the speakers, is full of hints from the side of the communicator-wife. The elliptical construction "*you and Noun / Pronoun*" – "*You and Gill*", which the speaker repeats twice, speaks of the addresser's allusion to the possible joint life of her husband and sister after her death and is a means of embodying the strategy of self-expression. The addressee does not understand the hint and begins to make excuses, believing that the speaker is accusing him of unfaithfulness, and uses the repetition of the lexeme "*nothing*" – "*Nothing's going on between us*", "*There's nothing going on*".

b Predicative evaluative constructions

Ex 6 *'Mom is worn out when she gets home. I know she'll have a break on Christmas Eve, seeing that it's Sunday, but she'll be rushed off her feet on Saturday. She has to work now and she won't feel like cooking Christmas dinner for just herself and Teddy.'*

'I suppose you're right,' he'd answered grudgingly (Andrews, 2006, p. 257).

The communicator wants to celebrate Christmas at home not only with her husband, but also with her mother and brother; for this, the speaker begins to manipulate the addressee and chooses self-expression tactics (Example 6). The addresser makes logical arguments with the help of predicative evaluative constructions "*Mam is worn out when she gets home*", the argumentation is embodied by using the verb of necessity "*have to*" – "*She has to work now and she won't feel like cooking Christmas dinner for just herself and Teddy*", and the desired result "*I suppose you're right*" is achieved;

c Constructions "*it's (high) time*"

Ex 7 *'He's growing fast,' Arnie remarked.*

'Yeah. Six years old,' she said. 'It hardly seems possible.'

'It certainly doesn't,' he agreed heartily. 'Makes you realize that it's time he had a brother or sister' (Evans, 1998, p. 202).

The strategy of frankness (Example 7) with the tactics of self-expression containing implicit speech influence on the part of the addresser boils down to the fact that the addressee-wife agrees to have more children. His

tactic is to emotionally set her up for a positive response by talking about the rather mature age of the son “He’s growing fast” and by using the construction “it’s time” – “Makes you realize that it’s time he had a brother or sister”;

d Combining verbs with emotionally marked adverbs

Ex 8 ‘You look lovely,’ he said running an admiring eye over his wife, who was wearing a close-fitting black dress which was perfect on her slim figure, the effect enhanced by her luxuriant dark hair, which was longer now and backcombed over the crown to give it fullness and height. Her wrist was expensively adorned with the gold watch Arnie had given her as a birthday present.

‘Flatterer,’ she said, grinning at him.

‘I’m only saying what’s true.’

‘Thank you, darling.’ She lifted her arm to have another look at her watch. It’s beautiful. I shall treasure it.’ (Evans, 1998, p. 315).

Example 8 illustrates the tactics of using flattery, which is expressed by suggestion. Suggestion is an influence on a person, in which the object assimilates the ideas of the subject passively, uncritically, without thinking and performs its tasks without a struggle of motives, trustingly perceives verbal, visual or symbolic stimuli. Suggestion is a process of impact on a person, which is associated with a decrease in awareness and criticism when perceiving and implementing the suggested content, with a lack of purposeful, active understanding of it, detailed logical analysis and evaluations in relation to experience and the subject’s current state (Moskalenko, 2007, p. 41). Suggestion is achieved by linguistic means – words, intonation, and non-verbal means – facial expressions, gestures, actions, and external environment. The content of the suggestion is included in the information that is reported, in a hidden, disguised form, and it is characterised by unawareness and imperceptibility of its assimilation (Rizun et al., 2005). Among the existing means of impact, an important role is given to the creation of the emotionality of the situation, which strengthens the positive motivation of the partners (members of the English-speaking family) of the interaction. In the presented discursive fragment, the speaker implements the strategy of frankness thanks to the flattery (combination of the verb and the adverb) towards his wife “You look lovely” and eye contact “running an admiring eye over his wife”. He creates an emotionally elevated mood in the latter, which leads to the gratitude of the addresser with a kind and caressing address “Thank you, darling”. Thanks to the presented tactics, the speaker influences the communicator and achieves an explicit expression of joy through the gift “It’s beautiful. I shall treasure it”.

e Constructions with lexical units of negative semantics

Ex 9 ‘What’s the matter, darling?’

‘Don’t talk to me. You dirty little bitch, you’ve made me cry.’

‘Angel!’ (Maugham, 2002, p. 65).

The discursive fragment of PARTNERS’ communication in Example 9 contains lexical units of positive semantics, namely the addresses “darling” and “angel” on the part of the male addresser and negative semantics – “dirty little bitch” – on the part of the addressee. The speaker-wife reinforces the lexical unit “bitch” with the attributive components “dirty”, “little”, but the appeal does not create a conflict, with irony realising the tactics of using flattery.

f Constructions “what a / an + Noun”

Ex 10 ‘By God, what a performance you gave.’

‘You weren’t so bad yourself, dear.’

‘That’s the sort of part I can play on my head,’ he answered carelessly, modest as usual about his own acting (Maugham, 2002, p. 101).

The manipulative ability of flattery lies in the fact that an addresser uses the construction “*what a / an + noun*” – “*What a performance you gave*” and it subconsciously pushes the addressee to frankness-flattery in response to “*You weren’t so bad yourself, dear.*” The tactic of using flattery in **Example 10** by the male speaker achieves its perlocutionary effect: his wife positively evaluates his work.

Fig. 1 describes means of implementing the strategy of frankness in symmetrical relations of spouses.

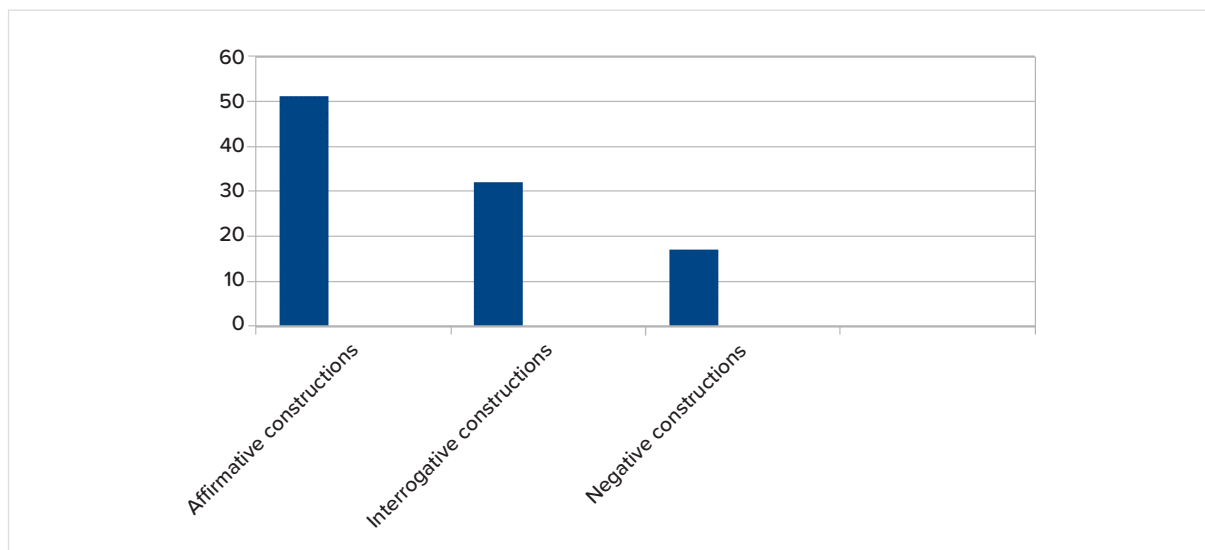


Fig. 1 Means of implementing the strategy of frankness in symmetrical relations of spouses

Therefore, the strategy of frankness in the English family discourse with the addresser-addressee configuration “HUSBAND-WIFE” is embodied by the tactics of self-expression and flattery in situations of symmetrical partnership relations.

Descending Status Vector of the Addresser HEAD → SUBORDINATE

The other aspect of our research is the situation of frank communication with the addresser-addressee configuration “HUSBAND-WIFE”, where the role repertoire of the interactants involves dominance. In the presented case, communicative acts with a descending status vector of the addresser (HEAD → SUBORDINATE) are investigated. The strategy of frankness involves imposing the subjective worldview of the dominant interlocutor, it is embodied by the addresser in the dominant position of the HEAD (a sample of 327 discursive fragments) by tactics of self-approval (**Examples 11–12**) and overloading the perceiver with information (**Example 3**) using the following constructions.

1 Affirmative constructions (67%):

a Constructions of an egocentric nature with verbs denoting opposition, such as “give – take”

Ex 11 *‘Like it or not, you’ll put up with it until I have a son. I’ve given you everything! I took you from a slum and gave you a home that’s a palace in comparison. You don’t want for anything. You don’t even have to go out and slave in some filthy dirty factory all day! If I hadn’t taken you in you would have ended up like your sister!’*

Nell was shaking with rage and humiliation. ‘How dare you! How dare you tell me my home was little more than a shack! You were glad to come and sit in it and have your meal off Mam’s table. How dare you criticize Daisy and me!’

‘I dare because it’s all true!’ (Andrews, 2006, p. 118).

In order to make a desired impression on another, such a method as self-advertisement or self-approval (Example 11) is used. There are different types of self-promotion, but in our case, it is when the addresser speaks on his own behalf. Communicators use self-approval tactics to increase their authority in a communicative situation of frank communication, and they often succeed, especially when the presented tactics are created thoughtfully. The effectiveness of self-promotion depends on many factors, especially on a sense of proportion and common sense (Moskalenko, 2007). That is, the use of verbs of opposition “give – take” – “I’ve given you everything!”, “I took you from a slum and gave you a home that’s a palace in comparison”, “If I hadn’t taken you in you would have ended up like your sister!” is a means of implementing self-approval tactics. Positive self-presentation is usually combined with a negative representation of another speaker according to the principle of psychological polarisation “one’s own – another’s” (van Dijk, 2015, p. 243), which is explained by the conditional sentence “If I hadn’t taken you in you would have ended up like your sister!”. Lexical repetitions with negation indicate that the speaker-Head verbally emphasises superiority over the addressee-wife. The lexical unit “slum”, which the communicator uses to compare the former home of the addressee, is opposed to the lexeme “palace” – this is how he calls his home “I took you from a slum and gave you a home that’s a palace in comparison”. The indignation of the Subordinate speaker due to the presented behaviour of the addresser is explained by repeating the interrogative sentence “How dare you” (3 times), to which the HEAD-husband answers without explanation, only asserting his rightness with the help of an egocentric sentence with the modal verb “I dare because it’s all true!”.

b Constructions with modality

Ex 12 ‘She said Joseph’s getting to be very boisterous. It’s being with the Flannagans all day.’

‘Daisy should take more notice of that child. If she’s not careful he’ll be running the streets when he’s old enough.’

‘I know, but what can she do?’

‘It’s a great pity she doesn’t have a trade in her fingers. If she’d been a dressmaker or a confectioner she could have worked from home.’

‘The likes of us would never have been able to be anything like that, Alfred.’

‘Well, at least any children we have will be properly looked after’ (Andrews, 2006, p. 130).

Manipulation is an integral part of the situation of frank communication, without which further existence is not possible, because it helps the speakers to achieve the goal. Manipulation is a type of influence, the skilful execution of which leads to the hidden excitement of another person’s intentions that do not coincide with his/her actual desires (Moskalenko, 2007). From a linguistic point of view, Dmytruk (2005, p. 11) considers manipulation as the use of linguistic means, which often actively interacts with paralinguistic means, exerting influence on the addressee, the purpose of which is the hidden rooting of certain attitudes in the addressee’s psyche. The discursive fragment in Example 12, which illustrates the interlocutors’ conversation about the boy, is one of the examples of the use of language manipulation in the communicative situation of frank communication. The speaker who plays the role of the HEAD in the relationship with the woman manipulates. This is manifested in his tactics of self-approval by the use of the modal verb of obligation “should” in the affirmative sentence – “Daisy should take more notice of that child” and the conditional sentence “If she’s not careful he’ll be running the streets when he’s old enough”. This tactic is revealed in the humiliation of the addressee’s relative, which is explicated by the phrase “it is a (great) pity” – “It’s a great pity she hasn’t a trade in her fingers” (a hint at the social position of the speaker-wife before marriage), and by the conditional sentence “If she’d been a dressmaker or a confectioner she could have worked from home”. And the addresser’s last remark expressed by an affirmative sentence with a verb in the future tense with an adverb

“Well, at least any children we have will be properly looked after” is a manifestation of frankness, confidence in the future of his unborn children and positive self-approval.

2 Negative constructions with emotionally coloured vocabulary of positive connotation (33%)

Ex 13 ‘Well, I suppose since there is no chance that my wife might take off that charming outfit and come back to bed with her husband where, I might say, she should be, I might as well get up.’

‘Tom Hartley...’

‘I know, my darling, you are about to ask me where I get my considerable sexual stamina from and I can only answer that...my love, oh my love...’ His voice had softened and the bantering tone left it. “You have no idea how much I love you, how happy you have made me; happy: the word doesn’t begin to describe my feelings. No, no, it’s too late now,” as she began to approach the bed, her own face melting with the depth of her emotion. ‘On the other hand...’ He began to laugh... (Howard, 2003, p. 45).

The conversation between communicators in Example 13 (role repertoire: husband – HEAD, wife – SUBORDINATE) shows the use of tactics of overloading the recipient with information selected according to some parameter by the addresser-HEAD. The man’s attempt to convince the addressee to go to bed is expressed by an overload of information containing affectionate and caressing addresses “my darling”, “my love”, declaration of love using the stereotypical phrase “I love you”, positively coloured vocabulary in negative constructions “You have no idea how much I love you, how happy you have made me.” Thanks to the presented manipulative speech influence, the desired result is achieved, which is visualised with the help of kinesics and proxemic non-verbal components “she began to approach the bed, her own face melting with the depth of her emotion”.

Ascending Status Vector of the Speaker SUBORDINATE → HEAD

Asymmetrical relations of English-speaking spouses involve communication with the ascending status vector of the speaker (SUBORDINATE → HEAD). The strategy of frankness in the position of SUBORDINATE (a selection of 410 discursive fragments) is embodied by the tactics of playing on feelings (Examples 14–17) by using the following constructions.

1 Affirmative constructions (48%)

a Constructions “to get used to”

Ex 14 ‘Don’t leave me, Tom. Lie beside me and hold me.’

‘You need sleep, my dearest love.’

‘I’ve got used to falling asleep in your arms, Tom.’

‘I wanted to ask...’

‘Not now.’

‘Then sleep, lovebud. I’ll not leave you’ (Howard, 2003, p. 67).

The SUBORDINATE addresser begs the male addressee not to leave her using the imperative construction with the particle “not” – “Don’t leave me”, and the speaker uses the man’s own name for it as an address “Tom” several times. It is the construction “get used to” – “I’ve got used to falling asleep in your arms, Tom” used by the SUBORDINATE speaker that embodies the strategy of frankness in the language (Example 14). The perlocutionary effect is achieved; the tactic of playing on the communicator’s feelings is successful, and the addressee-HEAD remains at home, which is explained by the verb in the future tense form with the negative participle “I’ll not leave you”.

b Constructions with inversion

Ex 15 *'Next week we'll be back in London and all this will be forgotten,' she said...*

'Kitty?' he said, 'yesterday – you know – that valley, the lake – it was the best day of my life. Honest to God. It was. Thank you.' For a moment she didn't know what to say. She had to bluster to cover up.

'You'll remember you said that, won't you, the next night you feel inclined to spend the night out with your mates?'

'I'll remember,' he said gravely. 'I swear it' (O'riordan, 1995, p. 142).

Clear logical arguments of the addresser and confidence expressed by the affirmative construction with verbs in the future tense *"Next week we'll be back in London and all this will be forgotten"* tell us of the speaker's role belonging to the HEAD. A SUBORDINATE husband in the context of the family communication implements the strategy of frankness with the tactics of playing on feelings (Example 15) with the help of affirmative constructions with fronting *"yesterday – you know – that valley, the lake – it was the best day of my life. Honest to God. It was"*. Fronting is used to strengthen the expression of language, to give it more brightness, to highlight a certain opinion of the speaker. An affirmative construction with fronting is supplemented with a phrase with the verb *"to thank"* – *"Thank you"*. Clarification by the communicator-HEAD in the form of an interrogative construction *"You'll remember you said that, won't you?"* leads to the reaction of the SUBORDINATE man, which is explained with an affirmative construction with the verb in the future tense form *"I'll remember"*, reinforced by the verb *"to swear"* – *"I swear it"*.

2 Interrogative constructions (29%)

Ex 16 *'She'll have to go now, won't she? She burned my arms and killed the baby. She's dangerous and she'll have to go. You'll send her away now, won't you, Jonathan? You'll send her away?... She can't stay now,' she said, the first note of hysteria in her voice. 'You can see she'll have to go.'*

He leaned forward, controlling the hopelessness in him and stroking the braid of thick, black hair that lay across the pillow. 'All right, Annie,' he said gently. 'Harriet will go' (Pearson, 1982, p. 263).

When the stepdaughter accidentally poured boiling water on the stepmother and this led to terrible consequences, the SUBORDINATE addresser believed that it was the right time to get rid of the girl (Example 16) and, using the tactics of playing on feelings, appealed to the HEAD husband with a request to send the girl out of the house. The use of questions *"She'll have to go now, won't she?"*, *"You'll send her away now, won't you?"*, repetitions of *"You'll send her away"* (2 times), *"have to go"* (3 times), modal verbs of possibility *"can"* and necessity *"have to"*, as well as the frank emphasis on the fact that it was the girl who killed their unborn son *"She killed the baby"*, lead to the desired result – the speaker-HEAD agrees *"All right, Annie"*, *"Harriet will go"*, so the tactic turned out to be successful.

3 Negative constructions (23%)

Participants in the family communication open their hearts and tell their secrets both voluntarily and under compulsion. When a communicative act between family members takes place without the desire of one of the participants to reveal their secrets, and especially those that compromise this communication participant, then the discourse is full of emotion: the use of emotionally coloured lexical units, non-verbal and extralinguistic means of communication.

The discursive fragment of the communication between the speakers shows that the cheating wife SUBORDINATE does not want to reveal her own secret, so when it turns out that the communicator (husband-HEAD)

knows her secret, she begins to cry and talk emotionally. The strategy of frankness is reflected in the use of the tactics of playing on feelings on the part of the addressee.

Ex 17 *‘I am afraid you have thought me a bigger fool than I am.’*

She didn’t quite know what to say. She was undecided whether to indignantly assert her innocence or to break out into angry reproaches. He seemed to read her thoughts.

‘I have got all the proof necessary.’

She began to cry. The tears flowed from her eyes without any particular anguish and she did not dry them: to weep gave her a little time to collect herself. But her mind was blank. He watched her without concern, and his calmness frightened her. He grew impatient.

‘You are not going to do much by crying, you know.’

‘I don’t care. I suppose you have no objection to my divorcing you. It means nothing to a man... He (Charlie, a lover) loves me with all his heart and soul. I’m not going to deny anything. Why should I? We’ve been lovers for a year and I’m proud of it. He means everything in the world to me and I’m glad that you know at last. We’re sick to death of secrecy and compromise and all the rest of it. It was a mistake that I ever married you, I never should have done it, I was a fool. I never cared for you. We never had anything in common. I don’t like the people you like and I’m bored by the things that interest you. I’m thankful it is finished’ (Maugham, 2002, p. 280).

The extralinguistic component used by the SUBORDINATE speaker in Example 17, namely the tears “*She began to cry*”, is an attempt to hide certain information from the addressee, to affect him emotionally, and to collect thoughts “*to weep gave her a little time to collect herself*”. When the communicator understands the inevitability of frank communication, the wife begins to reveal her soul from the fact that she is glad that the secret is finally revealed. The expressed joy is embodied in the language with the help of the adjectives “*glad*”, “*sick*”, “*thankful*” – “*I’m glad that you know at last*”, “*We’re sick to death of secrecy and compromise and all the rest of it*”, “*I’m thankful it is finished*”.

The addresser’s speech is full of negative phrases “*I don’t care*”, “*I’m not going to deny anything*”, “*It was a mistake that I ever married you, I never should have done it*”, “*I never cared for you*”, “*We never had anything in common*”, “*I don’t like the people you like*”, which is a means of implementing the tactics of playing on feelings.

Table 1 Tactics of the implementation of the strategy of frankness with the addresser-addressee configuration “HUSBAND-WIFE” in the case of asymmetric relations between the speakers

Tactics	HEAD	SUBORDINATE
Self-approval	+	
Overloading the receiver with information	+	
Playing on feelings		+

Table 1 and Fig. 2 summarise the tactics of the implementation of the strategy of frankness with the addresser-addressee configuration “HUSBAND-WIFE” in the case of asymmetric relations between the speakers.

Therefore, the strategy of frankness in the English family discourse with the addresser-addressee configuration “HUSBAND-WIFE” in situations of asymmetric relations is embodied by the addresser in the dominant position

of the HEAD with self-approval tactics, overloading the perceiver with information. When the addresser is in the position of the SUBORDINATE, they employ the tactics of playing on feelings.

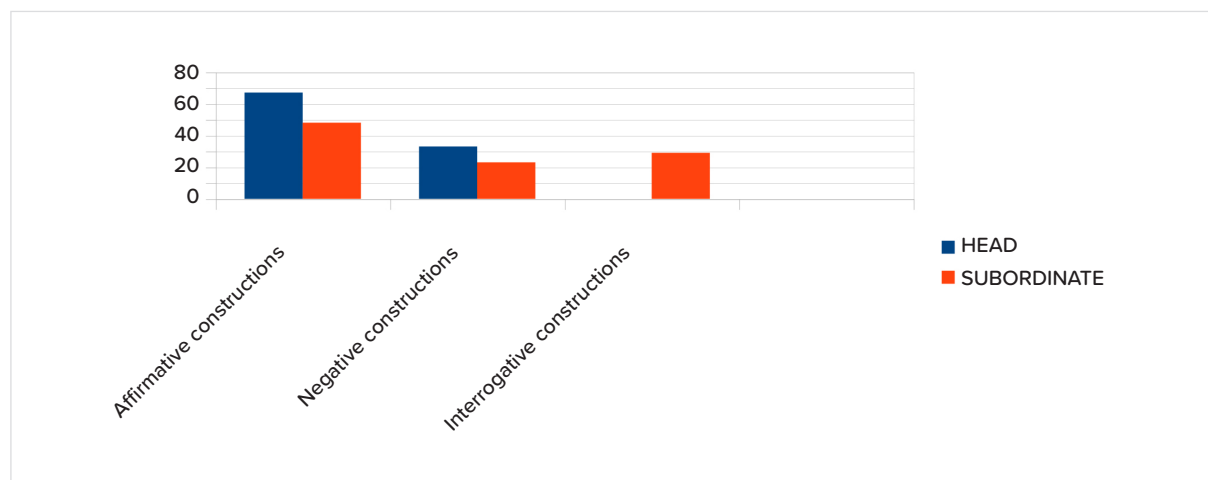


Fig. 2 Means of implementing the strategy of frankness in asymmetric relations of spouses

Conclusion

The communicative situation of frank communication is a model of interaction of family members with the dominance of the strategy of frankness, which is implemented by discursive tactics aimed at revealing the secrets and secret feelings of the participants of the communication under their symmetrical/asymmetrical relations.

The tactics of self-expression and the use of flattery realise the strategy of frankness in symmetrical relations of spouses. Structural and semantic types of statements are affirmative constructions, among which we distinguish constructions with lexical units of negative semantics, “what a/an + noun” constructions, “it’s (high) time”, combining verbs with adverbs, elliptical constructions, predicative evaluative constructions, constructions with the lexical unit “love” with verbs of grief, interrogative constructions, which are divided into general questions with modal verbs of possibility, rhetorical questions, constructions with verbs of reminder, and negative constructions.

The strategy of frankness in asymmetrical relations and the addresser-addressee configuration “HUSBAND-WIFE” is embodied by the speaker in the position of the HEAD by tactics of self-approval, overloading the perceiver with information. The addresser in the position of the SUBORDINATE uses the tactics of playing on feelings.

The structural-semantic types of statements in the configuration HEAD→SUBORDINATE are affirmative constructions, which are divided into constructions of an egocentric nature with verbs denoting opposition, such as “give – take”, and constructions with a combination of a verb and an adverb, negative constructions with the emotionally coloured vocabulary of positive connotation. The configuration SUBORDINATE → HEAD contains affirmative constructions, among which we single out constructions “to get used to (Gerund)”, constructions with fronting, and interrogative and negative constructions.

Synthesis of data, classification of structural-semantic and communicative-pragmatic features identify the English family discourse. This systematic approach will contribute to broader theoretical discussions in pragma-linguistics and sociolinguistics and serve as a possible model for studies of discourse. The further investigation of the English family discourse can provide the analysis of other communicative situations in it.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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Santrauka

Oksana Brovkina, Svitlana Baranova

Šeimos diskurso dalyvių vaidmenų repertuaras atviro bendravimo situacijoje: simetriniai ir asimetriniai santykiai

Straipsnyje nagrinėjama atviro bendravimo angliškajame šeimos modelyje komunikacinė situacija atsižvelgiant į vaidmenų repertuarą. Angliškojo šeimos modelio „vyras-žmona“ sąveikos dalyvių vaidmenų repertuaras ir „siuntėjo-gavėjo“ konfigūracija turi įtakos komunikacijos strategijos ir taktikos pasirinkimui, o vaidmenų pasiskirstymas nagrinėjamas kalbėtojų simetrinių / asimetrinių santykių požiūriu. Bendravimo šeimoje modelis tiriamas remiantis anglų kalbos diskurso medžiaga, kurią reprezentuoja grožinės literatūros kūriniai, taip pat pasitelkiant bendruosius mokslinius, struktūrinius-semantinius, pragmatinius-semantinius, diskursyvinčius ir iš dalies kiekybinius analizės metodus. Mūsų siūlomas bendravimo angliškojo modelio šeimoje analizės algoritmas sudarytas iš keturių etapų. Pirmajame etape nustatome dalyvių vaidmenų tipus; antrajame etape apibrėžiam bendravimui šeimoje būdingą strategiją ir taktiką; trečiajame etape nagrinėjame struktūrinius-semantinius ir komunikacinius-pragmatinius strategijos ir taktikos įgyvendinimo būdus, atsižvelgdami į siuntėjo-gavėjo konfigūraciją „vyras-žmona“ ir kalbėtojų simetrinių / asimetrinių santykių tipą; ketvirtasis etapas skirtas kalbos įtakos šeimos bendravimo situacijose įgyvendinimo ypatumams nustatyti.

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