COMMUNICATIVE TACTICS MANIFESTING MANIPULATION STRATEGY IN ENGLISH DETECTIVE DISCOURSE

Abstract. The article reports on the communicative strategy of manipulation and the communicative tactics that manifest it. The samples for the analysis have been taken from English detective discourse. The object of the study is the personages’ speech: the detective’s interrogation of witnesses and suspects. The scope of the study is the communicative tactics applied by the police officers to manipulate witnesses and suspects into revealing the truth about the murder. The purpose is cognitive and pragmatic analysis of the communicative tactics applied by the police officers to manipulate the witnesses and suspects. The investigation is based on the general and special linguistic methods: synthesis and analysis, method of observation, descriptive method, pragmatic and linguistic method, cognitive method, analysis of contextual interpretation. The cognitive and pragmatic analysis of the strategic plan of the police officer, the personage of the detective discourse, has resulted in our own classification of communicative tactics and strategies applied by the police officer during the interrogation of witnesses and suspects. It has been established that one of the major communicative strategies used by the police officer is manipulation. Manipulation is realized by the following communicative tactics: provocation, warning, menace, blackmail, persuasion, flattery. Each of these tactics is manifested by certain lexical, morphological and syntactic means of the English language. The perspective for further research is seen in the comprehensive study of the linguistic mechanisms of manipulative impact on the recipient in fiction.

Keywords: detective discourse, communicative strategy, communicative tactics, manipulation, provocation, warning, menace, blackmail, persuasion, flattery.
Communicative strategies applied by the police officer during the police investigation are oriented onto psychological impact on a respondent. This impact can have either negative emotional colouring (if the interrogated does not realize importance of the investigation, refuses to release information or tell lies), or positive emotional colouring (if the interrogated feels nervous, scared, anxious, and thus needs reassuring).

For this study, it was of interest to determine the distinctive features and the mechanism of manipulative speech means used by the police officer to manipulate witnesses and suspects into revealing the truth about the murder.


According to the Ukrainian communicative linguist F.S. Batsevich, a strategy of speech act is optimal implementation of the speaker's intentions to achieve a certain communicative aim. It implies controlling and choosing efficacious communicative moves, as well as changing them in a certain situation [1, p. 118].

E.V. Klyuyev defines communicative strategy as «a comlex of pre-arranged theoretical moves directed at meeting a communicative aim» [13, p. 18].

Similarly, O.S. Issers interprets communicative strategy as a comlex of speech actions directed at meeting a communicative aim and realized by means of communicative tactics [11, p. 124].

Communicative strategy and communicative tactics are interrelated concepts. Strategy involves planning the process of speech communication [11, p. 70], while tactics is a comlex of practical moves in the real process of speech interaction. It means that communicative tactics, unlike communicative strategy, above all, correlates not with a communicative aim, but with a set of communicative intentions [13, p. 19].
Pre-trial investigation implies interrogation of witnesses and suspects about their relationship with a victim, about their whereabouts at the time of murder and other circumstances of the murder. As L.V. Pavlichenko rightly remarks, the structural and communicative-pragmatic peculiarities of interrogations are conditioned by certain criteria: a) the factor of priority or secondarity of the interrogation; b) its cooperative or conflict orientation; c) the factor of addressee, according to which interrogation of a victim and interrogation of a witness are differentiated [22, p. 189].

We suggest extending the criteria list and adding the criterion of interrogation formality degree, as our data are rich in the episodes in which the policeman succeeds in gaining crucial information thanks to his promise to the interrogated not to reveal the facts in his official reports. Thus, semi-formal or informal style of interrogation turns out to be helpful.

The study of communicative tactics used by police officers in order to manipulate the interrogated can be considered a new and promising research as it offers answers to a number of cognitive-pragmatic aspects of speech production process.

**The aim** of the article is to establish and carry out cognitive-pragmatic analysis of communicative tactics used by police officers during the interrogation.

A research aim determines basic **tasks:**

- to consider the structural and communicative-pragmatic peculiarities of interrogations of witnesses by the police officer and offer another criterion of the study;
- to offer our own classification of communicative strategies and tactics used by a police officer during the interrogation of witnesses and suspects;
- to define manipulation as specific speech behavior;
- to determine and analyse the communicative tactics realizing the manipulative strategy in the personage communication in the English-language detective discourse.

To illuminate the uncharted area, we have processed personage communication in the English-language detective novels. The **material** of the study comprises
detective novels of the modern Scottish writer M.C. Beaton about the police detective Hamich Macbeth. **The object** of study is the interrogations of witnesses and suspects in which Hamish Macbeth is trying to create manipulative impact upon them. **The scope** of research is communicative tactics realizing the manipulative strategy.

General scientific and special linguistic **methods** have been used to meet the identified tasks. The applied general scientific methods are: *the method of synthesis and analysis* that promoted the research of particular communicative constructions marking the personage's strategic plan; *the method of observation* that enabled finding out the peculiar characteristics of the investigated data; *the descriptive method* that was helpful to identify variant and invariant characteristics of the investigated data. In terms of specific linguistic methods *the pragmatic linguistic method* has been applied for the analysis of the personage's choice of certain language forms unveiling their intentions; *the cognitive method* has been helpful to trace the connection of certain cognitive abilities with the speech and the forms of their interaction; *the contextual-interpretational method* has helped to identify explicit and implicit intentions of speakers as components of utterances in all the contexts.

Our observations of communicative strategies and tactics used by the police officer, the personage of detective discourse, to find out the murderer, have resulted in making our own classification of communicative strategies and tactics used for this purpose:

1) the strategy of direct information request realized by the communicative tactics of direct question, clarification, command and demand;

2) the strategy of conversation control realized by the tactics of requirement to speak to the point, interruption and eluding a question;

3) the strategy of self-presentation realized by the tactics of belonging to a certain group, solidarity with the addressee, distancing from the addressee;

4) the strategy of positive emotional impact realized by the communicative tactics of promise, request, soothing, apology, sympathy, gratitude, reproach and mitigation;
5) the strategy of manipulation realized by the tactics of provocation, warning, menace, blackmail, persuasion and flattery.


Manipulation can be interpreted as an addresser's specific speech behavior in the process of communication, directed to motivate the addressee to do unprofitable action (but advantageous for an addresser). The distinguishing feature of this method is its hidden property: both aim and process of motive are intentionally hidden from an addressee [10, p. 66]. In opinion of M. Tairova, manipulative influence can be carried out only on condition that the addressee accepts the addresser's point of view [18, p. 180]. As a rule, manipulative tactics are seen as actions that contradict ethic and / or communicative norms [3, p. 217]. According to M. Bityanova, manipulation is «toying» with human nature and human weaknesses that leads to «communicative blindness» of the addressee and makes him passively-obedient in confession of rightness of the communicator [4, p. 125].

Manipulative strategies are aimed to change the addressee's consciousness or behavior for addresser's benefit. N. O. Bigunova justly marks that the conclusions about manipulation / non-manipulation of a certain tactics can be made not on the basis of analysis of the structure of the tactics, but in accordance with the estimation of communicative intention of the speaker [3, p. 217].

Let us consider the use of outlined manipulative tactics applied by the personages of literary discourse for implementation of the manipulative strategy.

According to O. S. Issers and O. A. Plotnikova, the provocation tactics is purposeful, motivated communicative behavior that can be implemented due to consciously selected language and speech means [12, p. 223].

Provocation is directed to the correction of the psychological state of interlocutor with the aim of its change [17, p. 18] and refers to the conflict type of
communicative mutual relations, as it can cause a negative reaction for a partner and as a result negative consequences for the provocator. However, despite the possible unfavorable consequences of this tactics, provocative behavior also can be viewed positively. Thus, V. S. Grigorieva considers a provocative or motivating question that induces an interlocutor to "open" up. A "shocking" question or "question-attack" can make an interlocutor break the silence and make an unintentional statement [9, p. 75]. Such type of a question, in our opinion, is one of the means successfully enough applied by a detective to dig out necessary information. The following example illustrates use of tactics of provocation by the detective:

“Well, Mr Ferrari,” began Hamish, “I have it on good authority that yourself and two men were up at that bus on the night of the murder.” Mr Ferrari went as still as a lizard on a rock when a shadow crosses it [21, p. 91].

In the suggested fragment the provocation takes a co-speaker by surprise. The interrogated witness interlocutor gets in a "communicative trap" without further possibility to go away from the answer to the questions. The author’s commentary reveals the witness’s confusion.

Let’s consider another example of provocation tactics:

“The silliest thing,” said Edie with awful brightness. “I was vacuuming the room and I slipped and the end of the vacuum went straight through the window.”

“So all this talk about someone throwing a brick through the window is lies? Come on, Edie, I’m not daft and I know what goes on in Drim. Someone was jealous of you getting a wee speaking part.”

Edie glared at him and then shrugged her thin shoulders. “Oh, well, you know how we are here. Someone pushed money in an envelope through the letter box the other day for the repairs. We settle our own disputes”[21, p. 127]

In the given above example provocation tactics is based on the deduction of the policeman and his confession of possessing certain information. The policeman's guess or what happened (the villagers broke into Eddie’s window because they were jealous of her starring in the play), and accusing Eddie of hiding the hooligans, took her by surprise. She could not but admit the rightness of the policeman's.
Menace is considered as a complex directive-commisive speech act that combines two illocutionary aims: the agreement of the addresser to execute certain future action, as well as following a peculiar mode of behavior and an attempt to force someone into action [7, p. 18]. Menace is characterized by purposefulness in conflict discourse. It implicitly or explicitly performs the manipulative function through verbal (direct or indirect) and non-verbal (expressed by an author) means [7, p. 20].

The menacing tactics is aimed at changing the behavioral or emotional aspect of the addressee’s personality through fear [14, p. 14]. In English detective discourse the police detective usually applies menacing if the witnesses refuse to establish contact and conceal the required information, or lie, as in the following example:

“Either tell me here or come to the station with me and make a statement.” [21, p. 91].

Menacing in the fragment above is realized due to the conditional construction and use of verbs of physical action that is undesirable for an addressee (come to the station with me and make a statement).

Warning is seen as a manipulative speech act aimed at informing the addressee about negative consequences that the addresser can provide [15, p. 13]. The undesired consequences usually imply certain sanctions from the authorized person (it is a police detective in our case), that can result in outgrowing of warning into menacing – intimidation. Here is an episode from the detective discourse in which warning is accompanied by the lowering of the status of the interrogated:

“I will type up a statement,” said Hamish, “and get you to sign it. I will also have to take statements from Luigi and Giovanni.”

Mr Ferrari carefully stubbed out his cheroot. He looked thoughtfully at Hamish from under heavy-lidded eyes. “I am not pleased that you are pursuing inquiries into the death of a piece of shit,” he said evenly. “I am not pleased with you at all, Sergeant.”

“Listen to me, Mr Ferrari,” said Hamish, standing up, “this is not Italy. There are no headmen in this village, and I for one will not tolerate anyone who tries to achieve his ends with threats. You are not pleased with me! Just who the hell do you think you are?” [21, p. 91]
In the given example the tactics of warning is realized in the phrase: «Listen to me, Mr. Ferrari...this is not of Italy». This is how the police officer responds to the attempt of the addressee to threaten him. Warning is combined with an attempt to lower the status of the addressee (Just who the hell do you think you are?).

Blackmail is another tactics that represents a kind of manipulative psycho-emotional impact. According to A. D. Nikodimova, the addresser of blackmail intends to correct the behavior of the addressee, referring to possessing important information or ability to perform actions that can have negative consequences for the addressee [16, p. 12]. As well as the tactics of warning and menacing, blackmail comes forward as actualization of the predicted negative consequences. This tactics offers the addressee an alternative between two negative perspectives: realization of either menacing or demand:

Hamish looked at the can in his hand. Dead-0 Rat Poison. “Well, now,” he said quietly, looking at their stricken faces. “Well, now.” “It’s naethin’s to dae with this,” said Mrs Maclean. “We hae the rats. I got that frae the grocers the other day”.

“You realize I shall question Mr Patel and find out exactly when you bought it,” said Hamish.

There was a long silence. “She didnae get it from him,” said Archie at last. “I got it myself from Iain Gunn over at Coyle” [19, p. 77].

In the given example blackmailing is manifested due to structurally-semantic pattern “you may do or I I'll...” and the use of verbs of physical action undesirable for the interrogated “haul you in and charge you with”.

The tactics of persuasion is defined as a combination of means and techniques aimed at intensifying arguments in the process of communication. A. V. Golodnov determines “persuasive” communication as a special form of the relationship of individuals, according to which the addresser can attempt speech influence on a communicative partner (by means of communicative strategies of persuasion and temptation) in a peaceful way[8, p. 36], for example:

The excitement left Hamish’s hazel eyes. “Now you put it like that, it does sound daft. Still, I’d like to know where she was on the day of the murder.”

“You’re a policeman. You ask her.”
“I cannae. That beast Lovelace might get to hear of it, and I’m off the case. 
You couldnae ask her yourself?”

“Just like that!”

“You could just sort of sneak it into the conversation. I know, you thought you saw her in Drim on that day. Please.”

“I’ll try,” said Sheila doubtfully.

“And you’ll phone me?”

“Oh, all right” [20, p.136].

The tactics of persuasion is manifested by appeal to common sense and promises expressed by conditionals If I find... it is possible and I'll of never find out...unless.

According to N. O. Bigunova, flattery is a pseudosincere positively-evaluative manipulation speech act characterized by the presence of advantage in the speaker's motivation. The objects of evaluation in flattery speech act can be the addressee's appearance, moral and intellectual properties, abilities, achievements and actions [3, p. 218] :

He called on the dentist, a Mr Jones, who was justifiably annoyed at his call, having already been interviewed by the Inverness police. Hamish was not surprised. He knew Blair had sent him to Inverness to get him out of the way.

“You are such an important witness, Mr Jones,” he said, “that I am afraid you have to be questioned all over again. I will not be taking up much of your time.”

“Oh, well,” said the dentist, mollified. “There’s not much to tell...” [19, p. 53].

The provided example illustrates manipulation of the interlocutor by means of flattery. The tactics is based on the positively-evaluative semantics of the word important intensified by the word «such». An attempt to “flatter” the interlocutor in the situation is a success due to the author's comment (mollified), as the addressee calms down and releases necessary information.

Conclusion. Thus, the cognitive pragmatic analysis of the strategic plan of the police officer, the personage of detective discourse, has been helpful to find out that one of the communicative strategies used by the police detective is the manipulation strategy. It is manifested by the communicative tactics of provocation, warning,
menacing, blackmailing, persuasion and flattery. Each of these tactics becomes explicit due to certain lexical, morphological and syntactic means of the English language.

References: