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## COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGIES AND TACTICS IN RHETORICAL DISCOURSE

*The article focuses on the study of communicative strategies and tactics in English talks of TED conferences where speakers use speech technologies aimed at changing the information picture of the world. TED talks are included in the rhetorical discourse. Rhetoric can be defined as the use of symbols to induce social action. Communicative strategies as methods of communicative behavior of the speaker can be conscious and unconscious. Consciousness involves designing in the minds of the speaker a communicative act: an understanding of the communicative goal and modeling the means of achieving it. Rhetorical discourses, which include TED conferences, involve a conscious choice of communicative strategies by speakers. While preparing their talks, TED speakers bear in mind some definite communicative goal. This communicative goal is achieved by the speaker through the implementation of the planned communicative strategies. The nature of communication between the addressee and the addresser in the rhetorical discourse is in the form of a monologue, since the speaker reaches the communicative goal through a pre-prepared text, which is implemented regardless of the feedback of the listeners (applause, laughter, manifestation of emotions). The strategies used in TED talks are the following: a self-presentation strategy, a strategy of forming an emotional state, an argumentative strategy, an explanatory one, a strategy modifying the illocutionary force of the utterance, as well as a strategy of storytelling.*

**Key words:** *communicative strategy, language of media, rhetorical discourse, tactic, TED conferences.*

**Problem statement.** The study of the language of media originated in the second half of the twentieth century. It was then that scholars paid attention to various aspects of the use of language, from traditional linguistic methods of studying the language to the new trends, namely pragmalinguistics, discussion analysis, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, semiotics, cognitive linguistics, linguistics of the text, discourse linguistics, structural linguistics, communicative linguistics, ethnolinguistics, linguocultural studies and others.

Speeches and talks broadcast through the media represent, on the one hand, a semiotic system implemented through the use of a set of semiotic codes, on the other hand – a discursive act, that is, the process of interaction of two people or parties with the help of a semiotic system. Social worlds are formed with the help of symbolic systems, the central of which is the language.

**Research review.** The media space has been the subject of research and scientific contributions by such prominent linguists as Teun Van Dijk, Alan Bell, Martin Montgomery, Norman Fairclough, J. Searle, D.N. Shmelev, V.G. Kostomarov, O.A. Lapteva, G.Ya. Solganik, S.I. Smetanina, T.G. Dobrosklonskaya, O.O. Selivanova, O.V. Tarasov and others.

**Objectives of the study.** Our research focuses on the study of communicative strategies and tactics in English talks of TED conferences where speakers use communicative technologies aimed at changing the information picture of the world. TED talks are included in the rhetorical discourse.

Rhetoric can be defined as “the use of symbols to induce social action” thus making rhetorical discourse texts aimed at specific audiences for specific reasons in specific situations.<sup>1</sup> By rhetorical discourses we understand such discourses in which the speaker prepares the text on

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<sup>1</sup> Hauser, Gerald A. (2002). *Introduction to Rhetorical Theory*. Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press Inc. 2 edition. 320 p.

purpose and gets the listeners to voluntarily change their post-communicative behavior. Such changes can manifest themselves in different ways: from a change of opinion on a particular issue or a certain emotional reaction to some action performed by a listener.

TED conferences (Technology. Entertainment. Design) is a media company that posts talks online for free distribution. TED was founded by Richard Saul Wurman, an architect and graphic designer, in February 1984 as a conference which has been held annually since 1990. The slogan of TED is «Ideas worth spreading». The speakers are given a maximum of 18 minutes and address a wide range of topics from technology to human empowerment, from science to culture, from storytelling to motivational speeches in more than 100 languages. The famous speakers on TED were Bill Clinton, Billy Graham, Al Gore, David Cameron, Bill Gates and many Nobel Prize winners. In 2009, the organization began issuing licenses to third parties to conduct their own independent TEDx conferences.<sup>2</sup>

While preparing their talks, TED speakers bear in mind some definite communicative goal. This communicative goal is achieved by the speaker through the implementation of the planned communicative strategies. O.S. Issers defines a communicative strategy as a plan of complex linguistic influence, a kind of «violence» over the addressee, aimed at changing his model of the world, at the transformation of his conceptual consciousness.<sup>3</sup> The communicative tactic is designed to ensure the implementation of the chosen communicative strategy. Speech tactics should include one or several actions that contribute to the implementation of the strategy. The communicative strategy involves selecting the facts and presenting them in a definite coverage. The communicative tactic is intended to ensure implementation of the chosen communicative strategy.

Communicative strategies as methods of communicative behavior of the speaker can be conscious and unconscious. Consciousness involves designing in the minds of the speaker a communicative act: an understanding of the communicative goal and modeling the means of achieving it. Rhetorical discourses, which include TED conferences, involve a conscious choice of communicative strategies by speakers. The texts in such rhetorical discourses are long-prepared. The nature of communication between the addressee and the addresser in the rhetorical discourse is in the form of a monologue, since the speaker reaches the communicative goal through a pre-prepared text, which is implemented regardless of the feedback of the listeners (applause, laughter, manifestation of emotions).

The strategy of self-presentation provides the listener with information about the person who is speaking on the stage. It helps to impress and to gain the affection of the listeners. Self-presentation is an intentional and conscious behavior aimed at making some impression on others. The speaker provides the listener with some information about himself / herself, which unites them and helps to create a weighty impression: *I'm a social psychologist. I study prejudice, and I teach at a competitive business school, so it was inevitable that I would become interested in power dynamics. I became especially interested in nonverbal expressions of power and dominance.* Depending on the conditions of the communicative situation, this information may vary in scope and be included in different parts of the presentation.

One of the communicative tactics used in TED talks is the self-identification tactic. The manipulative nature of society is the basis for managing people. This is realized through one of the semantic categories of persuasive communication – the category of «equals».

The communicative strategy of self-presentation includes the tactic of inclusiveness or consolidation. The use of the so-called inclusive "we" is a linguistic means of implementing this strategy. The author includes himself in the circle of people to whom he/she addresses.

*Some days, it feels like the only thing we can agree on is that we can't agree on anything. Public discourse is broken. And we feel that everywhere – panelists on TV are screaming at each other, we go online to find community and connection, and we end up leaving feeling angry and alienated. In everyday life, probably because everyone else is yelling, we are so scared to get*

<sup>2</sup> What are TED Talks. URL: <https://www.quora.com/What-are-TED-Talks>

<sup>3</sup> Иссерс О.С. (2006). Коммуникативные стратегии и тактики русской речи, М., 288 с.

into an argument that we're willing not to engage at all.

The tactic of engagement allows the audience to imagine themselves in some situation. The speaker uses the pronoun «you» as if he is talking about the people sitting in the conference hall.

*What do you do before you go into a job interview? You do this. You're sitting down. You're looking at your iPhone – or your Android, not trying to leave anyone out. You're looking at your notes, you're hunching up, making yourself small, when really what you should be doing maybe is this, like, in the bathroom, right? Do that. Find two minutes.*

The communicative strategy of forming an emotional state includes a tactic of attracting attention, which is realized by means of using rhetorical questions or an unexpected opening of a speech. For example, Simon Sinek's talk «How great leaders inspire action» begins with the questions: *How do you explain when things don't go as we assume? Or better, how do you explain when others are able to achieve things that seem to defy all of the assumptions? For example: Why is Apple so innovative? Year after year, after year, they're more innovative than all their competition. And yet, they're just a computer company. They're just like everyone else. They have the same access to the same talent, the same agencies, the same consultants, the same media. Then why is it that they seem to have something different?*

Within the framework of this strategy, the authors of the speeches use questions which make the listener become thoughtful and take an active part in the thinking process: *I have an interest in education. Actually, what I find is everybody has an interest in education. Don't you? But if you ask about their education, they pin you to the wall. Because it's one of those things that goes deep with people, am I right?*

Sakena Ycoobi's talk «How I stopped the Taliban from shutting down my school» starts with a prayer in Arabic (*I seek refuge in Allah from cursed Satan. In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful*); with the help of this prayer she attracts attention of the audience even before she starts presenting her speech in English.

Another tactic of the strategy of forming an emotional state is a tactic of positive assessment. In the talk «American Civil War» the author positively evaluates the role of films in presenting historical events to young people: *Such films tend to play a more significant role in evoking the students' empathy and stimulating their interests toward history in in-class history teaching.*

There is also a tactic of valid evaluations that means the use of judgements by means of which a speaker attempts to objectively evaluate something he/she is speaking about and justify the assessment by using cause-and-effect relations between the parts of the argumentative text, for example: *We have a huge vested interest in it, partly because it's education that's meant to take us into this future that we can't grasp.*

The tactic of using a joke when you speak in front of a large audience helps the speaker to keep in touch and creates a positive emotional mood.

*There's something curious about professors in my experience – not all of them, but typically, they live in their heads. They live up there, and slightly to one side. They're disembodied, you know, in a kind of literal way. They look upon their body as a form of transport for their heads. Don't they?(laughter) It's a way of getting their head to meetings.*

The argumentative strategy includes the tactic of appeal to authority. This can be a historical figure from the past: *Picasso once said this, he said that all children are born artists. The problem is to remain an artist as we grow up.* This can also be the authority of today's research: *For example, Nalini Ambady, a researcher at Tufts University, shows that when people watch 30-second soundless clips of real physician-patient interactions, their judgments of the physician's niceness predict whether or not that physician will be sued. So it doesn't have to do so much with whether or not that physician was incompetent, but do we like that person and how they interacted? Even more dramatic, Alex Todorov at Princeton has shown us that judgments of political candidates' faces in just one second predict 70 percent of U.S. The speaker can use quotations to rely on the authority of the cited person: «There was a wonderful quote by Jonas Salk, who said: «If all the insects were to disappear from the Earth, within 50 years all life on*

*Earth would end. If all human beings disappeared from the Earth, within 50 years all forms of life would flourish». And he is right».*

The tactic of repetition is one of the most commonly used tactics because it helps to focus on what is important in argumentation.

*I have an interest in education. Actually, what I find is everybody has an interest in education. Don't you? I find this very interesting. If you're at a dinner party, and you say you work in education.*

The tactic of the reference to the experiment is very effective because people believe that the experiment is a scientific way of confirming the hypothesis, one of the main methods of scientific research.

*So this is what we did. We decided to bring people into the lab and run a little experiment, and these people adopted, for two minutes, either high-power poses or low-power poses, and I'm just going to show you five of the poses, although they took on only two. So here's one. A couple more. This one has been dubbed the «Wonder Woman» by the media. Here are a couple more. So you can be standing or you can be sitting. And here are the low-power poses. So you're folding up, you're making yourself small. This one is very low-power. When you're touching your neck, you're really protecting yourself. So this is what happens. They come in, they spit into a vial, for two minutes, we say, «You need to do this or this». They don't look at pictures of the poses. We don't want to prime them with a concept of power. We want them to be feeling power. So two minutes they do this. We then ask them, «How powerful do you feel?» on a series of items, and then we give them an opportunity to gamble, and then we take another saliva sample. That's it. That's the whole experiment.*

The tactic of illustration is manifested in the use of facts and examples. The illustrated type of argument is considered one of the most common means of influence.

*Here's what we find on testosterone. From their baseline when they come in, high-power people experience about a 20-percent increase, and low-power people experience about a 10-percent decrease. So again, two minutes, and you get these changes. Here's what you get on cortisol. High-power people experience about a 25-percent decrease, and the low-power people experience about a 15-percent increase.*

The speaker sets specific examples, gives statistics and quotations: *But why is it important to attract those who believe what you believe? Something called the law of diffusion of innovation, if you don't know the law, you know the terminology. The first 2.5% of our population are our innovators. The next 13.5% of our population are our early adopters. The next 34% are your early majority, your late majority and your laggards. The only reason these people buy touch-tone phones is because you can't buy rotary phones anymore.*

The explanatory strategy is used to form a certain idea of the topic. It includes such techniques as definition, interpretation, analogy and comparison.

*Why? How? What? This little idea explains why some organizations and some leaders are able to inspire where others aren't. Let me define the terms really quickly. Every single person, every single organization on the planet knows what they do, 100 percent. Some know how they do it, whether you call it your differentiated value proposition or your proprietary process or your USP. But very, very few people or organizations know why they do what they do. And by «why» I don't mean «to make a profit». That's a result. It's always a result.*

The next tactic within this strategy is the tactic of using metaphors and similes: *But if you ask about their education, they pin you to the wall. (Але якщо ви спитаєте про їхню освіту, вони просто притиснуть вас до стіни).* The metaphor «pin you to the wall» means «ставити когось у безвихідне становище, домагаючись знання, здійснення чого-небудь і те ін.». The metaphor in the sentence «*So the hierarchy is rooted on two ideas*» explains that every educational system on our planet is rooted in the same hierarchy of subjects. While giving some explanations and interpretations the speaker can apply comparisons and analogies: *So you have people who are like caricatures of alphas, really coming into the room, they get right into the middle of the room before class even starts, like they really want to occupy space. Women feel*

*chronically less powerful than men, so this is not surprising.*

The end of the speech is characterized by the use of the encouraging strategy: *We have to rethink the fundamental principles on which we're educating our children. And our task is to educate their whole being, so they can face this future. By the way – we may not see this future, but they will. And our job is to help them make something of it.* At the speech level, the strategy is realized with the help of verbs in the form of the imperative mood: *So, step away from the keyboards, start conversing.*

Manipulation of consciousness implies the use of modality as part of the strategy of modifying the illocutionary force of the utterance. Language modality is associated with the tactic of categorical / non-categorical naming (also known as hedging).<sup>4</sup> Such modal phrases as *I think, I believe, as it seems, no doubt, we know from experience* possess a great illocutionary power.

*1. So I have a big interest in education, and I think we all do. If you think of it, children starting school this year will be retiring in 2065. Nobody has a clue, despite all the expertise that's been on parade for the past four days, what the world will look like in five years' time. And yet we're meant to be educating them for it. So the unpredictability, I think, is extraordinary. 2. Good afternoon everyone. Today, I am here to talk about something that fascinates everyone — the films. Doubtlessly, films have become an indispensable part of today's popular culture. 3. Reflecting on my own experience, I found out that in fact, it was the American historical films I watched in high school that evoked my interest and passion in US history, the foundation of the presentation I am delivering today.*

In rhetorical discourse, the strategy of storytelling is often used. The term «storytelling» is not really linguistic, since it originates in business research. The author of the term is the head of the international company «Armstrong International» David Armstrong. He formulated the concept of «telling stories» in situations where it is necessary to support the engagement of the listener in the communication process for better perceptions of information (at business meetings, discussions, staff training, etc.) in the book «Managing by Storying Around: A New Method of Leadership».<sup>5</sup> In this book D. Armstrong introduced «storytelling» as a method of management and training of staff, as well as the formation of a corporate culture. The author considered the pragmatic function of the «storytelling» method in a commercial company, since it creates «corporate legends» which can convey business values.

Using stories draws attention and captivates TED listeners. Actually, storytelling is translating your message into narrative form. Research in neuroscience and cognitive psychology has shown that stories are typically more effective at changing people's minds than rational argument. This means that people – TED speakers in particular – need to view the world in narrative terms.<sup>6</sup>

Sakena Ycoobi's talk «How I stopped the Taliban from shutting down my school» includes a story about her difficult childhood: *I was born in a middle class family. My father was five years old when he lost his father, but by the time I was born, he was already a businessman. But it didn't make a difference to him if his children were going to be a boy or a girl: they were going to go to school. So I guess I was the lucky one. My mother had 16 pregnancies. From 16 pregnancies, five of us are alive. You can imagine as a child what I went through. Day to day, I watched women being carried to a graveyard, or watched children going to a graveyard. At that time, when I finished my high school, I really wanted to be a doctor. I wanted to be a doctor to help women and children. So I completed my education, but I wanted to go to university. Unfortunately, in my country, there wasn't a dormitory for girls, so I was accepted in medical*

<sup>4</sup> Дмитрук О.В. (2006), *Маніпулятивні стратегії в сучасній англомовній комунікації (на матеріалі тестів друкованих та Інтернет-видань 2000-2005 років)*, Автореферат ...кан філ. наук: 10.02.04, К.: Київ. нац. ун-т ім. Тараса Шевченка, 19 с.

<sup>5</sup> David G. Armstrong. (1992), *Managing by Storying Around: A New Method of Leadership*, New-York: Doubleday.

<sup>6</sup> *Strategic Storytelling: Maximum Impact in a Digital World*. URL: <https://arts.columbia.edu/overview-digital-storytelling-strategy>

*school, but I could not go there. So as a result, my father sent me to America.*

Modern storytelling has extended itself to representing history, personal narrative, political commentary and evolving cultural norms. Contemporary storytelling is also widely used to address educational objectives. New forms of media are creating new ways for people to record, express and consume stories.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, at the present stage, the speech effect is increasingly manifested in communicative strategies designed to absorb all the power of language and the possibility to influence human consciousness. The strategies used in TED talks are the following: a self-presentation strategy, a strategy of forming an emotional state, an argumentative strategy, an explanatory one, a strategy modifying the illocutionary force of the utterance, as well as a strategy of storytelling.

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## **Шияєва Т. Комунікативні стратегії і тактики у риторичному дискурсі**

*Стаття присвячена вивченню комунікативних стратегій та тактик в англійських промовах конференцій TED, де виступаючі використовують мовленнєві технології, спрямовані на зміну інформаційної картини світу. Промови TED належать до риторичного дискурсу. Риторика може бути визначена як використання символів для стимулювання соціальних дій. Комунікативні стратегії як методи комунікативної поведінки оратора можуть бути усвідомленими і неусвідомленими. Свідомість передбачає конструювання у свідомості оратора комунікативного акту: розуміння комунікативної мети та моделювання засобів її досягнення. Риторичні дискурси, до яких належать конференції TED, припускають свідомий вибір комунікативних стратегій спікерами. Готуючи свої промови, спікери TED мають на увазі певну комунікативну мету. Цієї комунікативної мети спікер досягає через вживання запланованих комунікативних стратегій. Комунікація між адресатом і адресатом у риторичному дискурсі проходить у формі монологу, оскільки доповідач досягає комунікативної мети через заздалегідь підготовлений текст, який реалізується незалежно від зворотного зв'язку у спілкуванні зі слухачами (оплески, сміх, прояв емоцій). Стратегії, що використовуються у виступах TED, це стратегія самопрезентації, стратегія формування емоційного стану, аргументативна стратегія, пояснювальна стратегія, стратегія модифікації іллокутивної сили висловлювання, а також стратегія «сторітелінгу».*

**Ключові слова:** комунікативна стратегія, мова ЗМІ, риторичний дискурс, тактика, конференції TED.

<sup>7</sup> Rara Theme. *Storytelling describes the social and cultural activity*. URL: <https://demo.raratheme.com/influencer-pro/storytelling-describes-the-social-and-cultural-activity/>

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