СЕКЦІЯ 1
ГЕРМАНСЬКІ МОВИ

PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF THE UK
PRIME MINISTER QUESTION TIME DISCOURSE, 09.04.2019

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Purpose. The following work is devoted to problem of the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister, 09.04.19, discourse pragmatic features.

Methods. The given investigation is fulfilled with the help of several methods: method of simple calculation, discourse analysis method, method of immediate constituents, pure sampling and comparative method.

Results. The Question Time of the UK Prime Minister discourse is defined in the given work as a communicative action in the House of Commons of the UK Parliament, organized in the form of parliamentary debates on Wednesday from 12–12.30 p. m. by putting questions of the MPs to the UK Prime Minister on the urgent home and outside problems for the UK community and receiving answers for them, as the way to control the activity of the UK Government at home and abroad. The communicators of the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister discourse are obvious: the UK Prime Minister, MPs and Speaker. It is pointed out that the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister resembles the fight, the battle, the sport competition with the Speaker as a referee and with the unequal rules for the UK Prime Minister not to put questions to the MPs.

Conclusions. It is stated that the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister discourse has the features of the political discourse with the pragmatic purpose to get / retain the power. It is stressed that the given discourse has the features of the institutional discourse with emphasis on the purpose, on the time and prototypical place of communication, on its role-statute distribution of the communicators, as well as on the stereotypical way of its organization. It is pointed out the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister discourse is a subtype of the parliamentary debates discourse with the communicative purpose to discuss and find solutions for the internal and external problems for the UK population within the UK Parliament. It is stressed that the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister discourse is an argumentative discourse with the communicative purpose to convince the interlocutor in the correctness of the addressor view point and actions, to convince the interlocutor in the necessity to act in the way proposed by the addressor of information. The Question Time of the UK Prime Minister discourse is defined as a discrediting discourse with the pragmatic purpose to discredit opponents as the way to get / retain the power in the country.

Key words: argumentative discourse, political discourse, institutional discourse, parliamentary debates discourse, Question Time of the UK Prime Minister discourse, discrediting discourse.

ПРАГМАТИЧНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ДИСКУРСУ ВІДПОВІДІ НА ЗАПИТАННЯ
ПРЕМ'ЄР-МІНІСТРА СПОЛУЧЕНОГО КОРОЛІВСТВА У ПАРЛАМЕНТІ,
04 ВЕРЕСНЯ 2019 Р.

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Мета. Подана робота присвячена розгляду прагматичних особливостей дискурсу відповідей Прем'єр-міністра Сполученого Королівства на запитання у парламенті від 04 вересня 2019 р.

Методи. Подане дослідження виконано з використанням певних методів: методу простого підрахунку даних, методу дискурсного аналізу, методу безпосередніх даних, методу суцільної вибірки та порівняльного методу.

Результати. У межах проведеного дослідження дискурс відповідей Прем'єр-міністра Сполученого Королівства на запитання у парламенті визначено як комунікативну дію в Палаті громад, організовану у формі парламентських дебатів щосереди з 12.00–12.30 шляхом постановки запитань до Прем'єр-міністра від парламентарів із нагальних зовнішніх і внутрішніх проблем для спільноти Сполученого Королівства та шляхом отримання відповідей на них як спосіб контролювати діяльність Уряду в межах країни та за кордоном. Комуніканти дискурсу відповідей Прем'єр-міністра Сполученого Королівства на запитання у парламенті є очевидними: Прем'єр-міністр Сполученого Королівства, парламентарі та спікер. Визначено, що відповідь Прем'єр-міністра Сполученого Королівства на запитання у Парламенті нагадує бій, битву, спортивні змагання зі спікером у ролі референ та нерівними для Прем'єр-міністра правилами не ставити запитання парламентарям.

Висновки. Зазначено, що дискурс відповідей Прем'єр-міністра Сполученого Королівства на запитання у парламенті має ознаки політичного дискурсу із прагматичною метою отримати / утримати владу. Підкреслено, що поданий дискурс має ознаки інституційного дискурсу з акцентом на мету, час і прототипне місце перебування комунікації, з акцентом на статутно-рольовий розподіл комунікантів, на стереотипний спосіб її організації. Він є підтипом дискурсу парламентських дебатів із комунікативною метою обговорювати та знайти рішення у парламенті на зовнішні та внутрішні проблеми для населення Сполученого Королівства. Зазначено, що дискурс відповідей Прем'єр-міністра Сполученого Королівства на запитання у парламенті є аргументивним дискурсом із комунікативною метою переконати співрозмовника у правильності думки та дій адресанта інформації, у необхідності діяти у спосіб, запропонований адресантом інформації. Його визначено як дискредитуючий дискурс із прагматичною метою дискредитувати опонентів, як спосіб отримати / утримати владу в країні.

Ключові слова: аргументивний дискурс, політичний дискурс, інституційний дискурс, дискурс парламентських дебатів, дискурс відповіді Прем'єр міністра Об'єднаного Королівства на запитання у Парламенті, дискредитуючий дискурс.

Introduction

Modern life being complicated is characterized by the diverse number of social-cultural spheres of human communication. This number is constantly rising with the development of human civilization, with the technological progress penetrating in all the spheres of human life. As a result of its rising, scientific interest to the different social-cultural spheres of human communication rises too. This interest presupposes scientific investigation of different types of discourse, where discourse is determined as an integrative social-cultural phenomenon of language usage in the form of certain message (or text) in speech chain for the communicative purpose with its extralinguistic factors: time and place of its occurrence, social, cultural, ideological, sexual, ageal, political, psychological, regional, religious and other factors of its communicators.

The given article is a ***further step*** of the political discourse investigations in the form of Parliamentary debates (Басюк, 2019; Дьяченко, Халін, 2019; Зернецька, Зернецький, 2004; Карасик, 2000; П'єцух, 2016, 2017; Руженцева, 2004; Рябоконь, 2009; Шейгал, 1998; Code of Conduct, 2015; Coxall, Robins, 1994, 2003; Forman, Baldwin, 1996). Differentiation of the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister discourse as a sub-type of the Parliamentary discourse and its pragmatic features investigation make the given work ***acute.***

1. The Question Time of the UK Prime Minister as an official process in the UK Parliament

The Question Time of the UK Prime Minister (PMQs) is known to be an official process of the UK Prime Minister (PM) questions answering to the MPs (members of UK Parliament) in the House of Commons of the UK Parliament during the period of half of an hour each Wednesday from 12–12.30 p. m.

The Question Time of the UK Prime Minister belongs to the Parliamentary debates, the official statute of which presupposes its mass media broadcasting within the radio, TV, internet, press sources. As parliamentary debates, the material of the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister receives its full transcription in the UK Parliament edition Hansard, which contains all official reports of the parliamentary debates.

Officially, the UK Prime Minister represents the highest organ of the executive power in the UK – the Government, while the MPs in the House of Commons represent the highest organ of the legislative power in the country – the UK Parliament.

It is normal, that representatives of the legislative branch of power are to control the activity of the executive organs of power in the form the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister. But some authors consider that there is no clear power distribution into the executive and legislative branches of power in the UK (Coexall, 2005: 123; Coexall, 2006: 187; Рябоконь, 2009: 20).

Moreover, the House of Commons has limited power, or no power at all, as the House of Lords is responsible for bills moving and adopting within the UK Parliament. In this case, the House of Commons is rather an arena of Parties' struggling for power in the country (Forman: 209; Рябоконь, 2009: 20).

Traditionally, the power in the UK is distributed by two main Parties: the Conservative and Labour Party. Nowadays, the UK Government is headed by Boris Johnsons, the representative of the Conservative Party, while Opposition is headed by Jeremy Corbyn, the representative of the Labour Party.

2. The Question Time of the UK Prime Minister as a certain type of discourse

It is obvious, that the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister as a certain communicative action within the UK Parliament is considered to be the political, institutional and parliamentary debates discourse.

In fact, it has the features of political discourse, being represented by the political elite: UK Prime Minister and MPs, and having its communicative purpose – the fight for power (Шейгал, 1998: 22–28; Рябоконь, 2009: 44).

It also has the features of the institutional discourse (Карасик, 2000: 37–64), having some norms and limits of it organization and realization. These norms and limits are the following: role-statute distribution of the communicators, the purpose of communication, the prototypical place of communication. But these norms and limits for the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister, in our opinion, should be enlarged by adding the following factors: the time of its realization, the form of its representation.

So, the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister as an institutional discourse has its purpose of communication – to discuss some problems with the UK Prime Minister; its prototypical place of communication – the House of Commons of the UK Parliament; its role-statute distribution of the communicators.

Thus, role-statute distribution of the communicators of the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister as an institutional discourse presupposes the role behavior of the communicators.

So, firstly, the communicators of the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister, the Prime Minister and MPs, are strictly forbidden to address each other directly, using "you".

Secondly, the order during the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister is regulated by the Speaker of the Parliament.

Thirdly, the aim of the MPs is to put questions to the UK Prime Minister and the aim of the Prime Minister is to answer them, without putting questions to the MPs.

As it was mentioned above, the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister has not only prototypical place of its realization, but also some time limits. It occurs on Wednesday from noon to 12.30 p.m. in the House of Commons.

The other factor, which determines the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister as an institutional discourse, is a form of its representation.

So, firstly, the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister presupposes the oral questioning-answering communication, organized in the form of parliamentary debates.

Secondly, questions to the Prime Minister are usually tabled on a topical basis with the name of MP, who makes a question, but without mentioning the question itself.

We can add, that the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister has the features of the parliamentary debates discourse with the communicative purpose to discuss and find solutions for the internal and external problems for the UK population within the UK Parliament.

The communicators of the parliamentary debates discourse fulfill the functions of the addressor of information, while making their messages or forming their questions to the addressee in the Parliament, or fulfill the function of addressee, whom the given messages are addressed. So, the participants of the parliamentary debates have a chance to put on different roles in the process of the parliamentary debates communication – the role of addressee and addressor of information, which is natural to the communicative reality.

We can assume, that the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister as a certain type of parliamentary debates discourse has its own specific features, which makes it possible to determine it as the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister discourse.

The communicators of the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister discourse are obvious: the UK Prime Minister, MPs and Speaker. As it was mentioned above, the roles of them during the Question Time are shared: the MPs are to put questions to the UK Prime Minister and Prime Minister is to answer them, while the Speaker is to regulate and to guarantee the order during this process of parliamentary debates.

In this case, the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister discourse is a communicative action in the House of Commons of the UK Parliament, organized in the form of parliamentary debates on Wednesday from 12–12.30 p. m. by putting questions of the MPs to the UK Prime Minister on the urgent home and outside problems for the UK community and receiving answers for them, as the way to control the activity of the UK Government at home and abroad.

We can state that communication during the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister is organized in the form of polylogue with strict limits for the UK Prime Minister only to answer questions without putting his own questions to the MPs.

The analysis of the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister discourse, 09.04.19, shows that it starts in usual way by putting the normative question for the UK Prime Minister about his engagements for the 4-th of September, 2019:

Siobhain McDonagh (Mitcham and Morden) (Lab)

Share

Q1. If he will list his official engagements for Wednesday 4 September

(Parliament UK. Commons. 2019-09-04 Debates).

The given question to Boris Johnsons is given by Siobhain McDonagh (Mitcham and Morden), the representative of Labour Party, whose membership is marked in the material of transcript as abbreviation *"Lab"*.

The first question to the UK Prime Minister during the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister has its formal character, it gives opportunity for the UK Prime Minister to express the UK official position for the current home and outside events:

The Prime Minister (Boris Johnson)

Share

I know that the whole House will want to join me in paying tribute to PC Andrew Harper, who was killed while on duty. His death and the serious injuries sustained by PC Stuart Outten in London and PC Gareth Phillips in Birmingham are a powerful reminder of the dangers that police officers face every day to keep us safe. This morning, I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall have further such meetings later today (Parliament UK. Commons. 2019-09-04 Debates).

So, Boris Johnsons expresses the official position of the Government to the current event in the UK – the death of the police officer on duty.

MP, who puts question to the Prime Minister, has a chance to react the given answer by reproducing his/ her comments. MP, who gives the first official question to the Prime Minister, has opportunity to give his / her comments for it and to form another question to the PM:

So, Siobhain McDonagh (Mitcham and Morden), who gives the first official question to Boris Johnsons gives his comments and formulate his question:

Siobhain McDonagh (Mitcham and Morden) Share

May I associate myself with the comments about the brave acts of the police officers? On Brexit, the former Prime Minister's deal was unacceptable to this House, but to leave without a deal is unthinkable, yet the Prime Minister pursues a game of brinksmanship built on the livelihoods, health and future of my constituents and our country. There is still an option to resolve this once and for all: if the Prime Minister really believes in no deal, let him put it to the people and ask our people if that is the price they want to pay (Parliament UK. Commons. 2019-09-04 Debates).

The parliamentary debates discourse and the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister discourse as a certain type of it is considered to be the argumentative discourse (Рябоконь, 2009: 169) with the communicative purpose to convince the interlocutor in the correctness of the addressor view point and actions, to convince the interlocutor in the necessity to act in the way proposed by the addressor of information.

It is normal, that the process of convincing the interlocutor presupposes the argumentation process in the form from abstract to concrete, from concrete to abstract, in the form of associative, descriptive and analytical arguments (Бєлова, 1998: 16), which may be given as the prepared arguments or may be given spontaneously (Бєлова, 1998: 95).

The analysis of the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister discourse shows that MPs prepare their questions beforehand, their questions are given in logical sequence from argument to argument, from fact to fact.

Generally speaking, the argumentative component of MPs questions consists of 2 main elements: the question itself and the prelude argumentative part of it as series of arguments:

Jeremy Corbyn Share

Yesterday, it was revealed that the Prime Minister's negotiating strategy was to run down the clock and that the Attorney General told him that his belief that the EU would drop the backstop was a complete fantasy. Are these reports accurate, or can the Prime Minister provide the detail of the proposals he has put forward to the EU? (Parliament UK. Commons. 2019-09-04 Debates).

The example under consideration contains the question itself of Jeremy Corbyn to

the Prime Minister and his prelude arguments for the given question in the form of Attorney General view point about the EU backstop dropping.

As for the Prime Minister answers, we can add that the argumentative part of them is given spontaneously.

The analysis of the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister discourse shows that it is rather discrediting than argumentative discourse.

We can state that the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister in the House of Commons resembles the fight, the battle between the UK Prime Minister and the MPs, each of them tries to win the victory of it – to discredit each other. But this fight is not contacting by using the physical forces, but mental one by using the rhetorical forces, by appealing to the emotions and feelings, values and wishes of the people – the inhabitants of the UK, the UK potential voters – who are not the direct communicators of the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister discourse, but the potential ones, whom this action is addressed.

We can assume, that the fight, the battle between the UK Prime Minister and the MPs resembles the sport competition which is organized according to some rules of the communicators behaviour with the Speaker of the Parliament as a referee:

[*Interruption*]
Mr Speaker
Share
Order. Forgive me for interrupting, Prime Minister, but there is a long way to go and a lot of questions to be reached. The questions must be heard, and the Prime Minister's responses must and will be heard (Parliament UK. Commons. 2019-09-04 Debates).

The difference between the battle in the House of Commons and sport competition is focused on the fact that opponents of the sport competition have the same rights, while the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister battle presupposes some limits of the UK Prime Minister behaviour to put questions to the MPs, which makes the position of the opponents, in some way, unequal.

We can state that the discrediting vector of the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister discourse is enlarged by fact of the Conservative and Labour Party struggling for power in the country. So, the UK Prime Minister as representative of the Conservative Party` is opposed to the Labour Party MPs. That is way it is normal that the number оf questions given by the representatives of the Conservative Party to the UK Prime Minister is lower than the number

of questions given by the opponents – the representatives of the Labour Party:

Jeremy Corbyn
Share
My first question to the Prime Minister, and no answer given! I asked what proposals had been put to the EU. We asked yesterday – many colleagues asked – and he seems utterly incapable of answering. Any rational human being would assume therefore that none have been put and there is no answer (Parliament UK. Commons. 2019-09-04 Debates).

The given example shows an attempt of the Head of Opposition in the Parliament Jeremy Corbyn to discredit the UK Prime Minister, to show him as incompetent person.

The same tendency to discredit opponents we can observe within the UK Prime Minister Boris Johnsons' answers to the MPs:

The Prime Minister
Share
I really do not see how with a straight face the right hon. Gentleman can accuse anybody of being unwilling to stand up to scrutiny when he will not agree to submit his surrender Bill to the verdict of the people in an election. He is frit; he is frightened (Parliament UK. Commons. 2019-09-04 Debates).

So, the given example shows, that the UK Prime Minister tries to discredit the Head of Opposition Jeremy Corbyn by paying attention to his immoral feature of being coward.

All in all, the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister discourse is rather discrediting than argumentative one, the aim of it is not to appeal to logical items – facts and arguments – but to illogical ones – feelings and emotions of the people.

Conclusions

Summing up the material, we can state that the Question Time of the UK Prime Minister discourse, being determined as a certain type of the parliamentary debates discourse, has the features of the political, institutional, parliamentary debates, argumentative and discrediting discourse with the pragmatic purposes to convince the interlocutor in the correctness of the addressor view point and actions, to convince the interlocutor in the necessity to act in the way proposed by the addressor of information, with the pragmatic purpose to discredit opponents as the way to get the power.

It is prospective to investigate the discrediting techniques of the given discourse, as well as the ways of their verbalization. It is also important to pay attention to the stylistic features of the given discourse.

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