

## SPECIFIC FEATURES OF THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES IN GREAT BRITAIN

*This article concentrates on the peculiarities of the parliamentary debates as a type of the political discourse. Parliamentary debates are analyzed as the certain speech genre that has its differentiating features. For this research the transcripts of the parliamentary debates in the UK in the post-Thatcherism period are chosen, particularly the transcripts of the debates in the House of Lords and the House of Commons during the Conservative and the Labour lead. These debates are investigated by certain parameters, taking into consideration the structural, semantic and pragmatic characteristic features. The debates show the strict time and theme regulations and the high association of the modern parliamentary procedures with the customs and traditions of the past. The article also points out institutionalized and non-institutionalized peculiarities of the parliamentary debates in the UK. The profound analysis of the debates highly demonstrates not only the formal procedural rules and norms of the parliament, but shows the features inherent to the British national character.*

**Key words:** *parliamentary debates, political discourse, speech genre, national character, point of order.*

**Introduction.** Political institutions such as parliaments have acquired during centuries a strong structural complexity and procedurality due to the set of conventionalized norms and standards, interaction patterns and decision-making routines. In the case of Great Britain, the increasing interest for the study of parliamentary debates may be accounted for by the fact that Parliament has long been the so-called "most visible" of British political institutions [11]. Moreover, the UK parliament and its institutions have set the patterns for many democracies throughout the world, and it has been called by one of the parliamentarians C. Jenkin, "the mother of parliaments" [30 June 2004]. The legislative provisions of this parliament have a strong effect on the formation of legislative authorities in many countries, especially in the countries of the Commonwealth of Nations. Taking into consideration the significant role of the British parliament in the world, the importance of its decisions for the international political arena, nowadays its proceedings are broadcast on radio and television, as well as widely highlighted and assessed in the national and international press, as well as represented in detail on the official website where the debates' transcripts are available. The studying of these transcripts facilitates the deeper insight into other nations' image of the world. It also helps for the understanding of the British national character and the ways it reflects the choice of certain language forms in the political discourse of parliamentary debates.

**Overview of the last researches.** Since the second half of the 20th century parliamentary discourse has become the object of scholarly research primarily in the fields of political sciences and sociology (P. Silk and R. Walters, R. Morgan and Cl. Tame, M. Olson and P. Norton, G. Copeland and S. Patterson), but only very recently has it become a interdisciplinary concern and involvement of different branches of linguistics (T. Carbó, S. Slembrouck, C. Ilie, I. Van der Valk, R. Wodak, T. van Dijk, S. Pérez de Ayala, J. Wilson and K. Stapleton, P. Bayley etc). Different specific features, structures and functions of parliamentary debates in different countries are analyzed in the works by A. Adonis, R. Bentley, W. Copeland, C. Patterson, R. Hart, C. Landtsheer. Cognitive basis, ideological background, strategies and tactics of parliamentary debates as a type of discourse are specified in the works by D. Coombs, J. Gumperz, D. Kovachev, A. Baranov, E. Kasakevich, A. Romanov. The rituals of the election processes envisaged in the debates are considered in many scholastic works (W. Hauser and W. Singer, M. Banerjee, M. Weiner, R. Roy and P. Wallace etc). In spite of the fact that parliamentary debates are in the focus of attention, the parliamentary debate in the UK as a speech genre that represents the unity of the differentiating structural, semantic, pragmatic and cultural features have never been the subject matter of linguistic investigations. This fact determines the novelty of the article, the **topicality** of which is specified by the necessity to envisage the whole spectrum of peculiarities inherent to the parliamentary debates

in the UK that presuppose the linguistic components of such debates. The analysis of the parliamentary debates as one of the most important types of official communication helps to better comprehend the British national character, as well as the political, economic and social processes of the nation.

The **purpose** of this paper is to define the peculiarities of the genre of parliamentary debates in the UK. It fulfills such **tasks** as defining the structural, semantic, thematic, pragmatic and cultural features of the UK parliamentary debates' genre. The **material** of the research is represented by the transcripts of the British parliamentary in the post-Thatcher era.

**Presentation of the basic material.** Political discourse is a communicative situation that realizes emotional and informational interchange in the real socio-cultural situation [8, s. 18; 9], is stipulated by ethno-sociocultural and polytextual characteristics [10] and is regulated by certain strategies and tactics of communication participants. Political discourse belongs to the institutionalized (status-oriented) type of the discourse that shows its participants as representatives of a certain social status, or social group. An institutionalized discourse is a powerful institution, the system of interpretations, evaluations and identifications of its participants, relations attached and legitimized by social institutions [4, s. 262]. Political discourse as a type of an institutionalized discourse results in the formation of different speech genres [2].

According to O. Selivanova, speech genre is a unit of communication, discursive invariant that is characterized by a certain thematic content, compositional structure, a range of lexical, phraseological, grammatical, stylistic means, as well as intentional and pragmatic peculiarities [5, s. 433]. Parliamentary debates as a genre of the political discourse are characterized by specific structural, semantic, thematic, cultural and pragmatic features. Such features need to be studied in a mutual interconnection of discursive, social and cultural dimensions. T. A. van Dijk claims that parliamentary debates, like all discourse, presuppose vast amounts of knowledge of their participants and its share among them; especially members of parliament need to learn about parliamentary procedures, and gradually, and more or less explicitly they acquire such knowledge and use it [6, s. 93, 94].

Particular for the parliamentary debates as a certain type of political discourse is the combination of the important means of institutionalized and non-institutionalized communication. The institutionalized features of this discourse are realized through certain norms, rules and standards that presuppose their objectivity. But at the same time it includes pragmatic, socio-economic and other aspects of communication that cannot be strictly formalized and ritualized. Such features are related to non-institutionalized types of discourse, i.e. everything that is determined by the subjective interests, moods, emotions etc. So the parliamentary debates represent the compromise between constitutive and regulatory principles and commonly-cognitive everyday practice [3, s. 4].

The present analysis focuses on the implications and consequences of traditionally established norms and values and of culture-bound institutional constraints that underlie parliamentary procedures in Great Britain. The parliamentary debates in the UK have a clear-cut structure that is seen in both the transcripts of the debates on the official website and the factual procedure of the debates.

Thus, the official website provides the representation of the transcripts materials of the debates on the official website with announcement of all procedural actions and the exact time of the opening and ending of every day (*The House met at half-past Ten o'clock; prayers; Mr. Speaker in the chair; members sworn; the following Members took and subscribed the Oath, or made and subscribed the Affirmation required by law, adjournment (4.30 pm); Debate to be resumed tomorrow* [24 May 2010]). The transcripts demonstrate the subdivisions of the material into different sections according to the form of their representation: *Oral Questions and Debates, Written Answers, Written Ministerial Statements (from November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2002), Petitions (from November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007), Oral Answers (from November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007), Corrections (from November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007)* and locations: *House of Commons, House of Lords, Westminster Hall*.

As the British like order and details, the direct provision of the number of the session and parliament, as well as the specification of the queen's reigning year is announced in the transcript of

every newly formed parliament after the election. All letters in this announcement are capitalized for stressing the importance of the information provided in it:

*Official report in the first session of the fifty-second parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland [which opened 7 May 1997]*

*Forty-sixth year of the reign of her majesty queen Elizabeth II*

The same features are followed at the end of every parliamentary year:

*End of the Second Session (opened on 18 May 2010) of the Fifty-Fifth Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the Sixty-Second Year of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second [25 April 2013].*

As order and traditions are inherent in the British character, the British parliamentarians are devoted to the traditions, the fact independent of the leading party – whether it is Conservative party or Labour Party – the traditions are always preserved. As one of the parliamentarians, Mr. Tony Benn (Chesterfield), highlighted in the debates: *This House is a house of traditions* [8 May 1997]. It is widely seen in the state opening and closing ceremonies dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Such ceremonies and rituals are crucial for the parliament, as they create symbolic knowledge, which is special to the context and therefore requires “learning” by those wishing to use or interpret it – often this knowledge is implicit rather than explicit, layered in the levels of meaning to one or more symbols, which might be read singly or together, able to make connections between the past and the present and allow expression of or “discipline” powerful emotions and relationships within secular, institutional contexts [6, s. 13].

High rituality and formality of the parliamentary debated is seen in the annual opening ceremonies of the parliamentary sessions that comprise the Queen’s speech where she points out with certainty what the Government will do or will continue to do, as well as that what it is committed to do for the oncoming session outlining both the national and international affairs. This speech brings the positive spirit promising the changes for better in the sectors that need them and to some extent provide the PR highlighting the importance of the governmental decisions and supporting the elected Government and the ruling party:

*My Lords and Members of the House of Commons, my Government will take forward policies to respond to the rising aspirations of the people of the United Kingdom; to ensure security for all; and to entrust more power to Parliament and the people.*

*My Government’s programme will meet people’s aspirations for better education, housing, healthcare and children’s services, and for a cleaner environment.*

*My Government will bring forward proposals to help people achieve a better balance between work and family life.*

*My Government is committed to raising educational standards and giving everyone the chance to reach their full potential.*

*My Government will continue to work with the Government of Iraq to deliver security, political reconciliation and economic reconstruction [6 May 2007].*

The ceremony has some traditional, patterned structural elements that are always kept in the speech. For example, the usual ending of the Queen’s speech is blessings:

*My Lords and Members of the House of Commons, I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your counsels.*

The Queen’s speech at the close of the session outlines the positive actions done by the Government during the session year. This speech serves as an official report of the Government’s achievements:

*My Government has strengthened key public services, ensuring that, increasingly, individual entitlements guarantee good services, and has worked to build trust in democratic institutions.*

*My Government has sought effective global and European collaboration, including through the European Union, to combat climate change, including at the Copenhagen summit in December last year, and to sustain economic recovery through the G20.*

*My Government has continued to reform and strengthen regulation of the financial services industry to ensure a stable financial sector that supports the wider economy, with greater protection for savers and taxpayers*

As the economic recovery is established, my Government has taken steps to reduce the budget deficit and ensure that national debt is on a sustainable path. Legislation has been enacted to halve the deficit.

*My Government has continued to work towards creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, including addressing the challenges from Iran and North Korea [8 April 2010].*

The Queen strengthens the priorities of the Government that have been fulfilled during the parliamentary year:

*My Government's overriding priority has been to restore growth to deliver a fair and prosperous economy for families and businesses, as the British economy recovers from the global economic downturn. Through employment and training programmes, restructuring the financial sector, strengthening the national infrastructure and providing responsible investment, my Government has taken action to support growth and employment.*

This ceremony has some traditional, patterned structural elements as well as the opening ceremony. Here the Queen thanks the members of the House of Commons for the successful work during the parliamentary year and blessings:

*Members of the House of Commons I thank you for the provision you have made for the honour and dignity of the Crown and for the public service.*

*My Lords and Members of the House of Commons I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your counsels.*

Both the opening and closing ceremonies show the high religiousness of the British people, as well as it is observed in the everyday beginning of the parliament's session with prayers.

The strict order of all the ceremonies and procedures in the parliament is followed in the major themes of the debates. Thus, these major themes are stipulated by the urgent problems and are subdivided into international and national issues. Peculiar for the international affairs representation is the subdivision of them according to the region or country and with the insertion of main for the international affairs themes: *Cyprus, Romania, Middle East, Drugs Trade, Kuwait, Consular Services, Japan (Whaling); Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe* [28 November 1990]. All these discussions involve the regular participant – the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs – who is usually interrogated about the state of affairs. In regard to the national affairs, it is typical for the transcripts of the debates to provide the strict subdivision of themes when the oral or written answers are represented: *Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Farm Subsidies, Hill Farmers, Small Farmers, Research and Development, Hill Farming, Family Farms, Farm Incomes, Milk Marketing Board* [29 November 1990]). Such discussions involve the regular participant – the minister responsible for certain inner affairs. In this case the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food answers the questions of other members of the parliament. The transcripts show that such a subdivision aims for the detailed discussion of every particular issue, expressing different points of view on proposals and seeking to make the most efficient decisions.

The process of debates procedure conducting is also predetermined by the point of order. As a result, it has some limits and regulations. For instance, the strict order of themes under discussion is followed as well as neither deviation from the main theme, nor too much time devoted to one and the same theme is permitted. The noise in the houses while protesting the proposals is also controlled. So the point of order predetermines the whole debate procedure in the parliament showing the British formalism and love of order. Thus, in the case of distraction from the main theme the Speaker commands to keep the order in the session room:

*Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Member for Lichfield (Mr. Fabricant) is addressing the House.*

*Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Michael J. Martin): Order. There is far too much conversation on the Government Benches [15 May 1997].*

*Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Opposition Front Benchers are being far too noisy.*

*The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. Tony Newton): I hesitate to call this a point of order, Madam Speaker, and I am not sure whether it is in order, but I hope that you will allow me to express our appreciation of the way in which you have conducted our affairs as Speaker [21 May 1997].*



The Speaker keeps the balance between the ruling party and the opposition that also helps at the same time to better follow the order in the House and to easier reach the consensus on controversial issues:

*Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member has put his point of view. The hon. Member fo Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) has an equal right to do so [28 November 1990].*

As was mentioned above, the parliamentary debates are both institutionalized and non-institutionalized in their nature. Genre-specific for the parliamentary debates in the UK is not only formal address, strict time and theme management, but also the interaction between government party speakers and the representatives of the opposition. Here both sides let themselves express their emotions, as usually reserved British demonstrate their support verbally by repeatedly saying in a loud choral voice: *Here, here* or they show their dissent using paraverbal means that are pointed out in the transcripts: *Mr. Winnick indicated dissent [15 May 1997]*. So the British people being usually cool and self-controlled need to somehow let off steam. A. Baronin points out this necessity of the British nation in his book “Ethnical psychology” [1, s. 197]. So, when it comes to crucial and thorny for the political, economic or social sectors issues, members of the parliament do not suppress their emotions.

In general, debates highly reflect cultural features of the British national character. Thus, the British people are characterized by their devotion to stability and conservatism. The society cultivates the historical past, ancient rituals and norms, trying to preserve state heritage, culture and national uniqueness [1, s. 199]. In the life of the British nation the leading tendency that predetermine the behavior are established rules that do not have any modifications for centuries. For the British education, religion and justice serve for formation of rules of behavior that should be followed without any deviations. Such features of the British national character are observed not only in everyday life, but in the official governmental institutions, such as the parliament.

**Conclusions and perspectives.** Parliamentary debates in the UK as a type of political discourse represent a specific speech genre that is characterized by a combination of interdependent structural, semantic and pragmatic peculiarities. They are predetermined not only by the procedural norms of this political institution, but also by the traits typical for the national character of the British. The perspective of the further investigations is in the detailed description of the verbal and paraverbal means of communication in the British parliamentary debates.

#### References

1. Баронин А. С. Этническая психология / А. С. Баронин. – К. : Тандем, 2000. – 264 с.
2. Бацевич Ф. С. Словник термінів міжкультурної комунікації [Електронний ресурс]. – Режим доступу: <http://terminy-mizhkult-komunikacii.wikidot.com/slovnnyk>
3. Правикова Л.В. Язык парламентских дебатов: Опыт системного описания дискурса по терроризму в Конгрессе США и Парламенте Великобритании: автореф. диссер. на соискание науч. степени канд. филол. наук : спец. 10.02.04 «Германские языки» / Л. В. Правикова. – Пятигорск, 2005. – 48 с.
4. Русакова О.Ф. PR-Дискурс : Теоретико-методологический анализ // О. Ф. Русакова, В. М. Русаков. – Екатеринбург : УрО РАН, Институт международных связей, 2008. – 340 с.
5. Селіванова О. О. Лінгвістична енциклопедія / О. О. Селіванова. – Полтава : Довкілля-К, 2010. – 844 с.
6. Crewe E. Ritual in Parliament / E. Crewe, M.G. Muller. – Frankfurt am Main : Peter Lang, 2006
7. Dijk van T.A. Knowledge in parliamentary debates / T.A. van Dijk // Journal of Language and Politics. – 2002. – № 2. – P. 93 – 109.
8. Fairclough N. Critical Discourse Analysis / N. Fairclough. – Boston : Addison Wesley, 1995. – 135 p.
9. Fairclough N. Media Discourse / N. Fairclough. – London : Edward Arnold, 1995. – 197 p.
10. Harvey M. Machiavelli's New Modes and Orders, A study of the Discourses on Livy / M. Harvey. – Chicago : University of Chicago. – 2001. – 150 p.
11. Ilie C. Discourse and metadiscourse in parliamentary debates / C. Ilie // Journal of Language and Politics. – № 1(2). – 2003. – P. 269–291.

Одержано редакцією 27.01.14  
Прийнято до публікації 14.02.14

#### **Анотація. П'єщук О. І. Особливі риси парламентських дебатів у Великій Британії**

Статтю присвячено дослідженню парламентських дебатів у Великій Британії як особливого жанру політичного дискурсу. Зокрема, у статті розглянуто структурні, семантичні та прагматичні риси цього жанру, зумовлені особливостями національного характеру британців.

**Ключові слова:** парламентські дебати, політичний дискурс, мовленнєвий жанр, національний характер, регламент.

**Аннотация. Пьецух О. И. Особенности черты парламентских дебатов в Великобритании**

Статья посвящена исследованию парламентских дебатов в Великобритании как особенного жанра политического дискурса. В частности, в статье рассмотрены структурные, семантические и прагматические черты этого жанра, обусловленные особенностями национального характера британцев.

**Ключевые слова:** парламентские дебаты, политический дискурс, речевой жанр, национальный характер, регламент.

УДК 811.111:81'42

В. Ф. Велівченко

## КОГНІТИВНО-КОМУНІКАТИВНИЙ АСПЕКТ ВИРАЖЕННЯ НЕПРЯМОЇ ОЦІНКИ В АНГЛОМОВНОМУ ДІАЛОГІЧНОМУ ДИСКУРСІ

Стаття присвячена аналізу вираження непрямой позитивної і негативної оцінки в англomовному діалогічному дискурсі. Дослідження ґрунтується на когнітивно-комунікативному підході до аналізу мовленнєвої діяльності та на інтегративному розумінні дискурсу як єдності процесу (цілеспрямованої розумово-комунікативної діяльності співрозмовників) і результату (тексту, породженого співрозмовниками впродовж цієї діяльності). Діалогічний дискурс визнано різновидом, який найповніше та найприродніше відображає цілеспрямовану мовленнєву взаємодію двох співрозмовників – мовця й адресата, кожен з яких вибудовує цей дискурс відповідно до обраної комунікативної стратегії й тактики. Меті вираження (не)прямой оцінки в межах емотивно-оцінного дискурсу слугують оцінні комунікативні тактики: ініціативні з боку мовця та реактивні з боку адресата. Встановлений корпус оцінних комунікативних тактик, застосованих кожним із співрозмовників у межах проаналізованих діалогічних дискурсів, указує на значну перевагу вираження та реагування на непряму позитивну й негативну оцінку, із домінуванням останньої. Загалом дев'яти ініціативним комунікативним тактикам вираження мовцем непрямой позитивної оцінки відповідають вісім реактивних комунікативних тактик реагування адресата, а десяти ініціативним комунікативним тактикам вираження мовцем непрямой негативної оцінки відповідає така сама кількість реактивних тактик реагування адресата.

**Ключові слова:** комунікація, емотивно-оцінний дискурс, оцінні комунікативні тактики, ініціативні комунікативні тактики мовця, реактивні комунікативні тактики адресата, пряма і непряма оцінка.

**Постановка проблеми.** Загальна спрямованість сучасної лінгвістики на вивчення мови в її реальному комунікативному виявленні зорієнтовує новітні наукові розвідки на аналіз функціональної значущості різнорівневих мовних одиниць. Це означає, що комунікація як процес міжособистісної мовленнєвої взаємодії співрозмовників визнається не суто мовним, а інтегративним феноменом, в якому нерозривно поєднані три обов'язкові складники: когнітивний, лінгвальний і прагматичний.

**Аналіз останніх досліджень і публікацій.** Новітня когнітивно-комунікативна лінгвістика пов'язує комунікативне функціонування мови з розумовими процесами, які стоять за будь-яким мовленням (Ф. С. Бацевич, Л.Р. Безугла, Г. П. Грайс, Т. А. ван Дейк, В. І. Карасик, О. І. Морозова, А. М. Приходько, І. С. Шевченко та ін.). Дослідження мови саме з урахуванням когнітивно-комунікативних її засад забезпечує проведення аналізу функціонування мовних одиниць в аспекті їхнього цілеспрямованого використання співрозмовниками для досягнення конкретної комунікативної мети. Такою комунікативною метою може бути й вираження оцінки – як позитивної, так і негативної, для чого співрозмовники застосовують відповідні оцінні комунікативні стратегії й тактики. З огляду на те, що такі стратегії й тактики наразі описані лише в поодиноких наукових працях (І. О. Беляєва, К. К. Миронова, Т. О. Трипольська, Н. В. Гончарова), цей напрям наукового