

The genre diversity of fitness discourse (based on the materials of English fitness classes)

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Abstract: The article deals with the genre diversity of English fitness discourse. The author works out the criteria for distinguishing the speech genres of fitness discourse, analyses their specificity. As a result of the research, it has been determined that the usage of speech genres in fitness discourse depends on the type of discourse (institutional/non-institutional), the agents of communication, speech intentions, the forms and the channel of communication.

Keywords: *institutional discourse, non-institutional discourse, speech intentions, speech acts, speech genres, sports discourse, fitness discourse.*

The result of the progressive social changes and the technological progress is the emersion of new social institutions, and, as a consequence, new discursive practices. One of such institutions is a fitness-club, which became extremely popular in the English-speaking community in the 60s-70s of the XXth century [12]. It spread over other territories and at present is a part and parcel of a contemporary individual. Entering the communication in fitness class, its participants produce a new type of discourse – fitness discourse (further – FD), under which we imply a purposeful speaking and thinking activity, which takes place in a specific pragmatic and cognitive context; a constituent of communication activity of sport thematics,

which realizes physical and spiritual needs of individuals through their non-institutional (personal) or institutional (fitness club) communication.

We consider FD as an institutional subtype of sport discourse (SD), which correlate as a particular with a general. FD is a particular case of sport discourse and is defined as a sport-oriented text with a communicative context in the background of which this text actualizes. FD restricts the list of sport-oriented themes. The divergences between FD and SD consist in speech intentions, communication strategies, tactics, themes and key concepts of both discourse types.

Sport discourse has already been researched by Russian and Ukrainian linguists [2-8], fitness discourse yet needs studying. Thus, the **object** of our research paper is English fitness discourse.

It's a generally acknowledged fact that any type of institutional discourse has its own set of speech genres (SG), under which they imply "a compositionally, thematically and stylistically fixed types of messages/texts, united by communication purpose, the speaker's intentions in accordance with the speech agents' individuality and the communication context" [1, p. 177]. SG are considered to be relevant issues of contemporary linguistics studies, therefore the **subject-matter** of our paper is the genre diversity of English fitness discourse. The article is **aimed** at working out the criteria for the identification of speech genres characteristic of English fitness discourse.

Some scholars regard discourse as a type of communication activity, which consists of speech acts, and involves different speech genres as the result of this activity. They refer speech genres to the categories that symbolize the transfer from speech acts theory to discourse analysis [1, p. 154, 175-186]. The logical succession of interrelations within the discourse is represented as speech act – speech genre – discourse [1, p. 185]. Thus, discourse appears to be a generic notion in reference to the speech act. For instance, FD is a collection of different speech genres of sports thematics mostly, but is not restrained by it only, including conversations about diets, looks, curves, health etc.

Proceeding from the understanding of speech genres as "relatively fixed types of texts", which are characteristic of any type of discourse, we suggest to classify FD genre spectrum according to the following criteria: a) institutional parameter; b) addresser-addressee relations; c) the character of the principal communication intention [9, p. 305-306].

Let us note that FD is mostly an institutional type of discourse, although when approached generally, it also includes non-institutional communication, i.e. when sport thematics outside the institution is also possible. Thus, stratifying the speech genres according to the institutional parameter, we shall distinguish between the communication within the social institute and outside it.

In the institutional communication we shall keep to the following criteria: the *social-institutional* communication, the communication between the *institute and a client* [11]. We shall also bear in mind the forms and the channel of communication.

In the social-institutional communication it's necessary to differentiate between the interactions such as "institute – clients" and "clients – institute", which may occur not necessarily in the social institute itself (fitness club), but, for instance, via the media, and is sure to include the representatives of the institute. The communication "institute – clients" may include the impersonal texts of oral (advertisements, commercials, video classes, talk shows, radio- or TV-programs) or written character (leaflets, big boards, magazines, newspapers, sites etc.) Let us consider the text fragment of a fitness classes advertisement as an illustration of the "institute – clients" written communication:

Why Bally?

Our Clubs – Your Fitness Retreat. Bally Total Fitness is the pioneer in designing and building world-class health clubs, so each facility is the result of decades of fitness experience. Every health club is designed to give you all you need to achieve your personal goals.

Wide Array of Classes: at Bally we offer our members a wide variety of classes. In our classes you will benefit from the knowledge, dedication and expertise of our certified instructors, and get a specialized workout at an affordable price.

Motivation to last: exciting atmosphere at Bally will help give you a real boost.

Safety first: Your safety and wellbeing are our top priority. Every facility is staffed with helpful personnel, equipment use guidelines and charts, germ-killing sanitary stations and numerous water fountains to keep you hydrated. Get started now! [13].

The "**institute – clients**" communication within the institute itself includes mostly oral speech genres – conversations, lectures, recommendations etc., but is also represented by written genres, such as questionnaires, forms etc. Here is the example of a questionnaire which is aimed at getting the clients motivated for doing exercises and practicing a healthy life style:

Answer the following questions:

1. *What held you back from exercising in the past?*
2. *What do you want to achieve next month?*
3. *What are your biggest goals this week/month/year?*
4. *How much water do you drink now?*
5. *Can you ditch coffee, soda and tea in the morning?*
6. *Do you know what is good to eat now?*
7. *How can you shop for better food?*
8. *How can you cut down on fast food or unknown foods? [14]*

The "**client – institute**" communication involves such oral speech genres as conversations (questions – answers), telephone conversations; and written speech genres (e-mails with questions to the instructors or fitness club representatives), blogs, chats etc. To illustrate the statement let us consider the textual fragment of a chat given below:

Question: *What Is the Best Way to Lose Fat?*

Answer: *The simple (and complex) answer is that there is no "best way" to lose fat. Each client will respond differently to a training program. However, there are some principles fitness professionals can apply when designing their clients' programs.*

Question: *Should I Do Cardio First or Weight Training First?*

Answer: *It depends on the client's goals. Many personal trainers think that performing strength training before cardiovascular exercise will augment the amount of fat used during the cardio workout because the strength training will deplete the muscles' store of carbohydrates (glycogen). However, strength training is not likely to deplete glycogen stores, because a lot of the workout time is spent resting between sets and exercises [15].*

The "**instructor 1 – instructor 2**" communication is represented by such speech genres as: (oral) meetings, conferences, fitness instructors courses, discs or lectures of the leading fitness trainers; (written) course advertisements, books, reference materials, magazines, journals,

chats, blogs, e-mails etc.) The example of a questionnaire reads as follows:

Specialized Courses

Those looking to become a fitness instructor may also take courses in yoga, Pilates, cycling, functional training, strength training, aquatics and weight-loss management. These are usually certificate classes and will not require additional licensure to take them. These courses are recommended for people looking to open their own gym, those working with a special population or instructors looking to supplement their current skills [16].

The **non-institutional communication** which can be graphically represented as "client 1 – client 2" encompasses such genres as conversations/discussions about fitness with the family members, friends, occasional acquaintances etc. Let us consider the textual fragment of the conversation between a hotel clerk (Louden) and a hotel guest (Kevin), who discuss the way and the reasons of working out. For the former it's dropping weight to participate in the wrestling contest, for the latter – to gain composure and sound sleep:

Louden: What is that stuff?

Kevin: Taiji – national form of exercise in China. I'll put your tip on that, Ok?

Louden: Can you get a workout this way?

Kevin: 100 million Chinese can't be wrong. It's mainly the matter of getting the mind and muscles. I use it when I'm on the road. It helps me to sleep like a baby.

Louden: Really? I'm on like a 600 calories a day diet, and working out like a mad man. I'm so wired that I can't sleep at all. I lie there for about 6 hours, thinking about my life and stuff, before I finally drop off.

Kevin: My name's Kevin.

Louden: I'm Louden. Louden Swain.

Kevin: Let me show you how it's done, Louden. It'll help you to sleep.

Louden: All right.

Kevin: You just stand there. Face this way. Just to catch me out of the corner of you eye. Now, breathe in, raise your arms, keep the movements slow, follow it, breathe out. Shift your weight to the left, step to the right, tuck your hands like this, bend the knee, now step back to the left, tuck your arms the other way. Step out.

Louden: I think I got it now. I'll try it on my own, when I get a chance [17].

Taking into consideration the classification worked out by T. Shmeliova, who singles out informative, evaluative, imperative and phatic speech genres [10], let us correlate the above-studied fitness discourse speech genres with its communication intentions.

Consider the following textual fragment of a fitness class to inspect the usage of various speech genres in it:

Hi. Welcome to my workout. Why do we work out? Well, besides a great feeling of accomplishment and the endorphin rush, we work out to burn calories, to lose weight and look our best, right? So, that's what we're going for today. The maximum amount of calories we can burn during the work-out and keep burning them after the work-out.

Let's get you warmed. Nice, strong warm-up, right? It's all about doing the cardio. Cardio is the key to a complete fitness routine. All right. Step-touch. Give me eight more. Change it into a hamstring curl. Pull that heel all the way back. Good. Feel the front of your thigh stretch. Remember, the harder you work out, the more calories you burn.

Excellent job! You did it, right? Now I know you can! And now you know that when you're done and you're doing your "yoga cool down", which is coming up next, you're burning your calories [18].

Communication intentions	Speech genres	Form of communication	
		oral	written
		direct verbal channel (human factor/machine/ electronic resource)	indirect verbal channel (printed media)
to inform, to assure, to agree, to inquest	informative	lectures, conversations/discussions, consultations, advertisements, Skype communications	books, reference materials, monographs, fitness sites, magazines, articles, manuals, advertisements, commercials, leaflets
to praise, to scold, to evaluate the physical state or body curves and the results of the client's workouts	evaluative	recommendations, conversations, consultations	questionnaires, forms
to request, to give orders, to encourage, to prohibit	imperative	fitness videos, meetings, conferences, fitness instructors courses, discs with the leading trainers' lectures, recommendations, explanations	individual diets, chats, e-mails, blogs
to make the contact with the audience	phatic	greetings, saying good-bye, sympathizing etc.	

As we can see from the textual fragment, the fitness instructor begins his class with the phatic speech act (greeting the clients: "Hi. Welcome to my workout."), which is followed by the informative speech act, the main purpose of which is to make the connection with the audience and to explain the further course of the fitness class and the importance of exercising for good looks and health.

Gradual move to the warm-up is achieved through the call to action "Let's get you warmed" and an explanation of the importance of warming up before exercising. The exercising itself is realized with the help of imperative speech acts, which form an imperative SG: "Step-touch. Give me eight more. Change it into a hamstring curl. Pull that heel all the way back." The move to the final stage of

a fitness class is achieved through the evaluation of the physical activity of the clients and expressing a belief in their potential ("Excellent job! Now I know you can!") convincing them that the work they had done was effective and useful ("And now you know that when you're done and you're doing your "yoga cool down", which is coming up next, you're burning your calories").

Thus, FD is the space for the realization of different genres within the sports thematics. The leading genre of

FD is fitness class. Fitness class combines various communication intentions while exercising – to improve curves and health, emotional and spiritual state of a client; the thematics of their conversations, key concepts, which are verbalized through informative, evaluative, imperative and phatic speech genres; the latter are formed by various speech acts. The result of the research can be used **in perspective** to study the specificity of FD strategies and tactics.

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Белоус И.М. Жанровое разнообразие фитнес-дискурса (на материале англоязычных фитнес-занятий)

Аннотация: Статья посвящена жанровому разнообразию англоязычного фитнес-дискурса. Автор разрабатывает критерии выделения речевых жанров фитнес-дискурса, анализирует их специфику. В результате исследования было определено, что использование речевых жанров в фитнес-дискурсе зависит от типа дискурса (институциональный/неинституциональный), участников коммуникации, коммуникативных интенций, форм и канала общения.

Ключевые слова: *институциональный дискурс, неинституциональный дискурс, коммуникативные интенции, речевые акты, речевые жанры, спортивный дискурс, фитнес-дискурс.*