

Strategies and tactics of communicant-egotist

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Abstract. This article is an attempt to cast an eye on the research of strategic arsenal of communicant-egotist. The article focuses on manipulative, domineering and confrontation strategies as certain kinds of social relationships. The study of fiction discourse fragments makes it possible to reveal the communicative behaviour of egotists. It has been found out which strategies and tactics are mostly used by communicant-egotists.

Keywords: *communicant-egotist, communicative strategy, tactic, manipulation, domineering, conflict*

Introduction. The complicated nature of the phenomenon under study requires an interdisciplinary approach. To recognize the social nature of human language is to view language through its function which is a means of communication. As in speech communication language is used intentionally and purposefully, ample understanding of the meaning of linguistic units is impossible without the proper understanding of the functional significance or their pragmatics, which becomes evident in the speech interaction of communicants. The principles and conditions for effective communication are highlighted in detail in works by P.G. Grice [2], S. C. Levinson [5], D. Tannen [7] and others.

The aim of this article is to analyze strategies and tactics of communicant-egotist. The special attention is paid to the manipulative strategy as the most frequent one.

Materials. We have analyzed the fiction of 20-21st century [3], [6], [8], containing utterances of egotists.

In order to conduct a more deep and profound research we have used the following **methods and techniques** of scientific research as contextual analysis, discourse analysis, conversational analysis, descriptive method and technique of generalization.

Results and discussion. People who enter into relationships with other people are communicants. The communication transaction is a means of sharing information about things, ideas, tasks, and selves. Through communication people define what they think of themselves in relationship to others. Through communication people express themselves and their needs to others. In the process of interaction a speaker and a listener realize different motives, aims and intentions, which can be represented as oppositely aimed vectors.

Communication can be viewed as an exchange of influences. An effect can be emotional, physical, cognitive, or any combination of the three ones just mentioned. Influence is not the same as manipulation. Influence recognizes the rights and boundaries of other people, and it is based on direct, honest communication while manipulation depends on covert agendas and an attempt to coerce another person into giving in. A manipulative relationship advances the goals of the manipulator at the expense of the person being manipulated. Egotists feel superior to others physically, intellectually or in some other way and have the tendency to exploit others and disregard their rights.

The analyzed data show that egotists may use different communication strategies (manipulative strategy, strategy of domineering, confrontational strategy) and tactics. 'Strategy' involves a long-term orientation and overall plan for using resources to reach an ultimate goal in the

face of an uncertain environment, while 'tactics' concern the concrete manoeuvres and attempts – the short-term-oriented operational actions and activities – for achieving these goals. A particular strategy may involve an assortment of tactics. There is a wide range of tactics used by egotists ranging from verbal threats to subtle attempts to arrange situations to suit them.

Here is the example of manipulative strategy.

Nevertheless, today, when the young man spoke of setting something, taking a line, she felt that it was the truth, and she answered very simply and without hesitating.

"We must do our duty," she said. "We must speak to my father. I will do it tonight; you must do it tomorrow."

"It is very good of you to do it first," Morris answered. "The young man – the happy lover – generally does that. But just as you please."

It pleased Catherine to think that she should be brave for his sake, and in her satisfaction she even gave a little smile. "Women have more tact," she said. "They ought to do it first. They are more conciliating; they can persuade better."

"You will need all your powers of persuasion. But, after all," Morris added, "you are irresistible."

"Please don't speak that way – and promise me this: Tomorrow, when you talk with Father, you will be very gentle and respectful."

"As much so as possible," Morris promised. "It won't be much use, but I shall try. I certainly would rather have you easily than have to fight for you."

"Don't talk about fighting; we shall not fight."

"Ah, we must be prepared," Morris rejoined, "you especially, because for you it must come hardest. Do you know the first thing your father will say to you?"

"No, Morris; please tell me."

"He will tell you I am mercenary."

"Mercenary!"

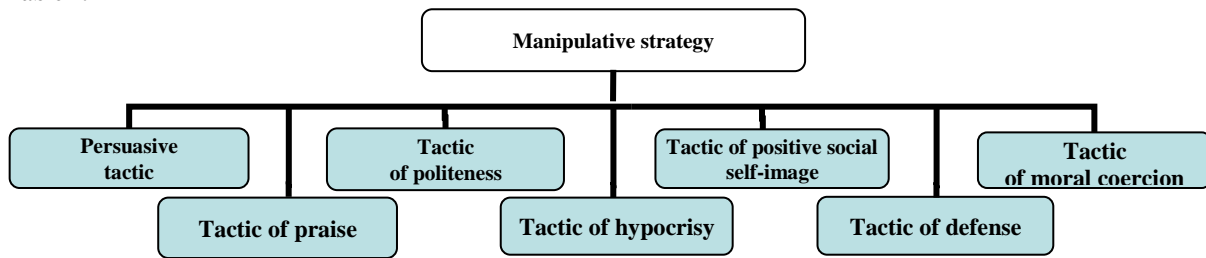
"It's a big word, but it means a low thing. It means that I am after your money."

"Oh!" murmured Catherine, softly[3].

The communicant-egotist (Morris Townsend) wants to avoid the meeting with the heroine's father (Dr. Austin Slopper), a wealthy physician, who understands that Morris pursues his selfish motives and is after Catherine's money. The manipulator (Morris) makes Catherine speak to her father first, using pleasant, ingratiating and reasonable words.

The manipulative strategy means employing the following tactics: persuasive tactic, tactic of praise, tactic of politeness, tactic of hypocrisy, tactic of positive social self-image, tactic of defense and tactic of moral coercion.

Table 1.



Utterances of egotists are regarded as potentially conflicting. Let's analyze the example:

The Monkey King is an excitable, selfish creature with magic skills. As punishment for bad behaviour, he is sent by the gods on a long, hard journey to the West.

.../ They followed the Stone Monkey to the Cave of the Water Curtain. There the Stone Monkey sat down and talked to them.

'Gentlemen!' he said. 'I have been through the waterfall and have come back again. I have given you a home in this cave, so am I not your king now?'

The monkeys bowed to the Stone Monkey and they all cried, 'Great King for a thousand years!' The Stone Monkey became the Monkey King and he made other monkeys his ministers [8, c. 7].

In this text fragment the speaker (*The Monkey King*) demonstrates a positive self-image in order to get the king status. He uses the tactic of optimal self presentation to convince his communicative partners (*am I not your king now?*). The Monkey King shows his own qualities and actions in the most favourable light. In this case the interpersonal conflict could have been prompted by differences in perceptions and interests but it did not occur as the hearers (*the monkeys*) submitted.

An unavoidable part of interpersonal relationships is conflict. People who manipulate others have difficulty in maintaining good interpersonal relationships. Conflict is a clash of opposing beliefs, opinions, values, needs, assumptions, and goals [1]. The basic strategic choice is whether to avoid or engage in conflict. The fate of a conflict is related to the communication strategies used. The interactants can use either disruptive or constructive strategies.

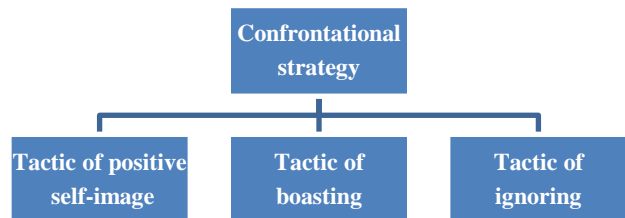
Constructive strategies are aimed at finding a mutually favorable solution. They include empathizing with the other party, accepting responsibility, emphasizing commonalities, and initiating problem solving. Disruptive strategies include fault-finding and rejecting the other party's statements, hostile questioning and joking, minimizing one's own responsibility, attributing attitudes to the other party, demanding changes in the other's behavior, threats, and even the use of violence. A pattern of disruptive tactics escalates a conflict. Which tactics are used affects the course of the conflict.

Generally, conflicts go through different stages of intensity. In low-intensity conflicts, the parties do not want to destroy each other. They use tactics aimed at finding a mutually favorable solution. In medium-intensity conflicts parties assume that both parties can win, and that it is possible to pursue both one's own and another's interests at the same time. No one feels that the opposition must be destroyed. In high-intensity conflicts, one party intends to destroy or at least seriously hurt the opposition. The par-

ties believe that winning or losing is a reflection of their own self-worth, prestige, or competence. When this happens, the issue itself is no longer important because each interactant perceives himself/herself to be on the line. Ego conflicts have the greatest potential to destroy a relationship. The intent of aggressive behavior is to dominate, and victory must be total.

Thus, the communicant-egotist uses confrontational strategy implemented by the tactics of positive self-image, boasting and ignoring.

Table 2.



The strategy of interpersonal dominance is observed in egotists, like in the following case:

George couldn't help disliking Grandma. She was a selfish grumpy old woman. .../

'How much sugar in your tea today, Grandma?' George asked her.

'One spoonful,' she said. 'And no milk.'

Most grandmothers are lovely, kind, helpful old ladies, but not this one. She spent all day and every day sitting in her chair by the window, and she was always complaining, grouching, grumbling, griping about something or other. .../ She didn't seem to care about other people, only about herself. She was a miserable old grouch. .../

Grandma slipped the tea. 'It's not sweet enough,' she said. 'Put more sugar in.'

George took the cup back to the kitchen and added another spoonful of sugar. He stirred it again and carried it carefully in to Grandma.

'Where's the saucer?' she said. 'I won't have a cup without a saucer.'

George fetched her a saucer. .../

When George's mother or father were home, Grandma never ordered George about like this. It was only when she had him on her own that she began treating him badly. .../

'Daddy says it's fine for a man to be tall,' George said.

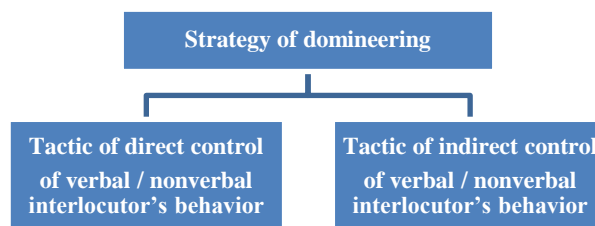
'Don't listen to your daddy,' Grandma said. 'Listen to me' [6, p. 2-3].

In this example a selfish grandmother dominates her 8-year-old grandson. She uses the tactic of direct control over the grandson's behavior employing inducement speech acts. It should be mentioned that the ways the speaker con-

veys his/her inducement can be either direct (when the meaning of an utterance directly reflects its communicative purpose) or indirect (when the utterance possesses the syntactic structure and meaning usually associated with another speech act). Direct inducement speech acts are directive utterances (e.g. *Put more sugar in; Don't listen to your daddy; Listen to me*) and indirect inducement speech acts are non-directive utterances (e.g. *Where's the saucer?; I won't have a cup without a saucer*).

The indirect inducement speech act combines two different meanings: 1) the primary, or semantic, meaning derived from the linguistic units that compose the utterance. It is the explicitly expressed meaning of the utterance; 2) the secondary, or pragmatic meaning, determined and regulated by the communicative (intentional) purpose of the utterance. Interrogative and declarative utterances of non-directive semantics refer to the indirect speech acts of inducement. Though the pragmatic meaning of such utterances overlaps with their primary meaning, it is the pragmatic meaning that reveals the communicative intention of the speaker. Thus, it is only the illocutionary force of directive that manifests the transposition of such utterances to the plane of directive utterances.

Table 3.



Conclusions. Our study has defined strategies and tactical arsenal of communicant-egotist used in fiction discourse. Egotists employ the following strategies: manipulative strategy, strategy of domineering and confrontational strategy. The basic potential of the egotist is found in manipulative strategies and tactics. The main characteristic features of egotists are ignoring interests of other people and achieving their own goals. While discussing the manipulative strategies the most frequent tactics that are used by the communicant-egotists are the persuasive tactic, tactic of politeness, tactic of positive social self-image, tactic of moral coercion, tactic of praise, tactics of hypocrisy, and tactic of defense.

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