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**COHESION AS A BASIC DISCOURSE CATEGORY  
IN THE UK PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

*This article concentrates on the comprehensive studying of the discourse and textual category of cohesion in the political discourse of the British parliamentary debates. To characterize different typical features of the parliamentary debates the interdisciplinary approach is involved encompassing discourse studies, sociolinguistics, ethnopsychology, as well as political science and cultural studies. The parliamentary debates form a specific speech genre with characteristic features reflecting their semantic, pragmatic, functional, organizational and structural peculiarities. The formation of the political discourse of the UK parliamentary debates' genre model is strongly influenced by the ethnocultural features formed by the ethnicity on the basis of language peculiarities, cultural autonomy, national-territorial specifics and national self-identification unity of the English ethnos. The political discourse of the British parliamentary debates is characterized by several cohesive types, including thematic, referential, connotative, metaphoric-associative, pragmatic, structural and compositional cohesion. The language means involved in the creation of the combinative moves of the parliamentary communicants are evaluative, emotive and expressive lexemes as well as phraseological units for intensifying the meaning of the provided speeches in the UK parliament and for stipulating the formation of highly positive self-image and deeply negative image of political opponents in the debates procedures. This research also deals with the extralinguistic factors that include the events and phenomena related to the political, economic and social spheres of the British society. Such debates represent the events and phenomena regardless the party that gains majority in the UK parliament. The paper analyses the Hansards of the UK parliamentary debates. Such debates represent the events and phenomena of the post – Thatcher period.*

**Key words:** political discourse, parliamentary debates, speech genre, cohesion, themes, pauses, seriality, MPs.

**Statement of the problem.** Political institutions such as parliaments have acquired a fixed structure and procedure due to the set of conventionalized norms and standards, interaction patterns and decision-making routines. In the UK parliament 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 the all types of the British political institutions [10; 11]. Moreover, the UK parliament and its institutions have set the patterns for many democracies throughout the world. 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 widely broadcast, as well as widely highlighted and assessed in the national and international mass media, as well as represented in detail on the official website where the Hansard is 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 the parliamentary debates.

**Analysis of resent research and publications.** 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 an 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. Bayleyetc). 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 par-

liamentary debates as a type of discourse are specified in the works by D. Coombs, J. Gumperz. 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). 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.

**Task statement.** The **aim** 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 Hansard of the British parliamentary debates in the post-Thatcher era.

**Outline of the main material of the study.** Political discourse is a communicative situation that realizes emotional and informational interchange in the real socio-cultural situation [3; 7, p. 18; 8, p. 9], is stipulated by ethno-sociocultural and polytextual characteristics [1; 9] 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 relations attached and legitimized by social institutions. Political discourse as a type of an institutionalized discourse results in the formation of different speech genres that have their own characteristic features.

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 discourse, 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 [5, p. 17; 6, p. 93, 94].

Text and discourse categories forming the genre of the political discourse of the UK parliamentary debates include discreteness, integrity, cohesion, intertextuality, interdiscoursology, modality, anthropocentrism and interaction. The dominant feature that characterizes the UK parliamentary debates is the highly emo-

tive, expressive and evaluative interaction between communicative partners. Political communication in the British parliament is limited by the impossibility to use invective, politically incorrect words; its rules and norms presuppose the demonstration of respect to the opponents. The UK parliamentary debates have strong metaphoricity of the interactions and theatrics of the communicative processes that turn the debates into a performance to stipulate effectiveness in reaching communicative goals.

The UK parliamentary debates as a genre of political discourse have peculiar structural, compositional, semantic, thematic, cultural and pragmatic parameters. To characterize such features the interdisciplinary approach is involved encompassing discourse studies, sociolinguistics, ethnopsychology, as well as political science and cultural studies. The formation of the political discourse of the UK parliamentary debates' genre model is strongly influenced by the ethnocultural features formed by the ethnicity on the basis of language peculiarities, cultural autonomy, national-territorial specifics and national self-identification unity of the English ethnos.

The characterized type of the political discourse is a highly institutionalized communication restricted by a certain political institute that represent stable complex of formal rules, principles, norms, inclinations aimed at regulating different spheres of human activity and organize them in the system of roles and status. But this type of discourse is not limited only to a set of institutionalized patterns as it is common for its functioning to have pragmatic, sociocultural and other communicative aspects that cannot be structured and restricted. Such features are non-institutionalized, presupposed by subjective interests, moods, attitudes, emotions etc. Thus, parliamentary debates show a compromise between constitutive and regulatory principles together with the everyday parliamentary practice. The harmonious unity of official protocol-stipulated and regulation-formed standardized features and emotive subjective highly spontaneous components form a multi-faceted model of the UK parliamentary debates.

The genre parameters of the UK parliamentary debates as a type of political discourse are reflected in the text and discourse categories intertwined with the English national character, traditions, cultural inclinations and peculiarities of institutionalized communication. Discourse categories demonstrate categorical system of multiaspectedness of the UK parliamentary debates.

**Cohesion** as a discourse category exists in the discourse practices in explicit and implicit facets being

realized by means of background knowledge, situational and contextual knowledge, encyclopedic terminological knowledge, as well as the situation within which message is produced and interpreted.

Preciseness, continuity and reliability of communicants' activity during the parliamentary debates is determined by **thematic cohesion**. Themes under discussion during the debates are subdivided according to the national and international issues. E.g.: main national topic *EDUCATION AND SKILLS* encompasses several interrelated topics: *Academic Boycott, Child Care, History Teaching, Literacy and Numeracy Standards, SEAL Programme, Looked-after Children, Apprenticeships, Children's Centres, Specialist Diploma* (HC Deb 28 Jun 2007: Column 454 – Column 468). These topics deal with multiaspected problems involving the whole spectre of educational system, i.e. primary and secondary education, assessment of pupils literacy and numeracy level, extra-curricular activities, higher education, as well as the looked-after children programmes.

Such a theme division is not universally established, as together with thematic division the British parliamentary debates are characterized by regional division. There are certain days in the parliament focused exclusively on the most urgent and widely discussed international affairs.

Therefore, the general thematic rubric *FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS* has the following geographic subrubrics: *Cyprus, Romania, MiddleEast, Bulgaria, Antartica, Japan*, as well as subrubrics associated with the urgent international issues: *Drugs Trade, Consular services, Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe* (HC Deb 28 November 1990: Column 852 – Column 886). Although the above-mentioned topics are geographically subdivided, the topics of the debates are not limited by a certain set of debatable issues. The discussed issues are of different global and regional status concerning the whole range of international and domestic policy, economy and social sphere, i.e. inner political affairs in various countries, environmental protection within the country and beyond, international security and cooperation in the world. Thematic multiaspectedness provides for deep and profound discussions of the state of affairs within the country and beyond. During parliamentary discussions on the urgent issues participants demonstrate complete awareness, competence and deep knowledge covering all the aspects of the topics under discussion.

Peculiar for the thematic cohesion in the UK parliamentary debates is a strictly regulated topic subdivision disabling any distractions from the dis-

cussed issues. All thematic blocks are narrowed to highly specialized microtopics that are separately thoroughly discussed but are interrelated within one general macrotopic. Clarity of communicants' active thematic discussions is a basis of **seriality** as a typical feature of the parliamentary debates. The grounding of debates' seriality is realized via thematic division of the parliamentary discussions. Actually, serial discourse is comprised of several parts, united thematically. This feature disables inclusion of any alternative occasional utterances within the thematic boundaries which are strictly controlled by the settled norms and regulators influencing the mode of behavior during the debates.

Every microtopical pattern is completed, as it is crucial to make a conclusion and integrate with the other microtopics within the boundaries of a certain macrotopic. Variative nonlinear pattern of debates is unacceptable causing chaotic disordered mode of debates. Thus, political discourse of the UK parliamentary debates functions as an invariant that is stable and unchanged despite the circumstances.

**Referential cohesion** is based on the correlation between produced text message and real events, situations, facts and their participants. Created discourse always reflects subjective image of the real world and engages a lot of potential recipients by means of triggering some information.

To guarantee the correctness of their statements the participants of the debates use normative documents and acts in their text messages to legislatively prove the correctness of their utterances, as well as they use different historical figures, involving direct and indirect quotation of their words to confirm preciseness and deepen into the reality, and real situations, data, facts that lead to precedent situations. Creating such references optimizes comprehension and understanding of communicants' utterances, upraises effectiveness of the participants' interactions to reach communicative goals.

For example, during the debates on resuming a chair by a newly elected Speaker of the House of Commons the communicant addresses the real situation in the parliament and real political agents. The communicant states the improvements of working conditions for the MPs in the modern parliament due to the Speaker who safeguards and regulates rights and obligations of the MPs in the House of Commons in comparison to the predecessor who occupied this post at the beginning of the 20th century (*Manners Sutton*):

*Mr. John Major (Huntingdon): The bargain cuts both ways, does it not? How much better off are*

*we today than the House was under another of your predecessors, Mr. Speaker Manners Sutton, whose initial qualities for being Speaker were that he*

*«never ... appeared to pay any attention to the privileges or orders of the House?» (HC Deb 7 May 1997: Column 10)*

Recalling the state of affairs in the House of Commons and involving direct quotation enforces the communicant's point of view and helps to positively estimate Speaker's activity aimed at preserving equality of MPs rights and opportunities, unlike his predecessor.

**Connotative cohesion** refers to the dominant position of emotiveness and expressiveness, wide usage of lexical units with positive or negative component of evaluation in the political discourse of the UK parliamentary. Emotive and expressive lexemes provide for structuring recipients' attitude to the presented informational messages. For instance, debates on financing contractions in the cultural sphere cause critical remarks from the Opposition. In the addressed to the Opposition reply the Government representative uses negatively connotated lexeme *rubbish* (*something that you think is very low quality or not true* [2]) taken from colloquial English into the official communication to modify the meaning of the expression making it more negative:

**Mr. Don Foster (Bath) (LD):** *May I help the Minister to answer the question from the hon. Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Gerrard)? He has referred to the £40 million legacy trust, which is welcome, but will he acknowledge that the figures from his own Department illustrate that the cut to the bud gets of those lottery projects responsible for culture, the arts and heritage amount to more than £470 million up to 2012?*

**Mr. Lammy:** *Rubbish* (HC Deb 25 June 2007: Column 3).

This emotional utterance highlights communicants' disagreement with the partner in political communication who states contradictory facts. By means of disagreement the communicant is trying to defend his own party from critical remarks from the opponents.

**Metaphoric-associative cohesion** forms and decodes metaphoric reinterpretation of the verbal level of text realisation, as well as mediates the usage of vivid metaphorical representation in the political communication. New metaphors formation is primarily provoked by some sharp critical evaluations from the opponents in hot pre-election fever period that is typical for the political discourse of parliamentary debates. For instance, the communicant representing Labour interests compares ideas of improv-

ing private energy sector to entertainments in music hall (*musichall – a type of theatre entertainment that included music, dancing and jokes, or the building used for this entertainment* [2]):

**Edward Miliband:** *I had expected a music hall atmosphere this morning and the hon. Gentleman did not disappoint. As we can see from the general election campaign, the difference between us and the Conservative party is that we published earlier this month clearly worked-out and costed plan son pay-as-you-save insulation, on regulating private sector landlords to improve energy efficiency and on local authorities. The Conservatives talk about the £6,500, but as with so many other things from them, they have no idea where the money is coming from* (HC Deb 8 Apr 2010: Column 1162).

This metaphoric association implies strongly negative connotation, as word-combination *music hall atmosphere* wittily expresses communicant's attitude to the opponents in the political communication who are represented negatively due to demonstration of their unseriousness and incompetence.

**Pragmatic cohesion** is oriented towards interaction and is represented in the text by a built-up programme of recipient's interpretation that considers cooperation, effectiveness and harmonious interrelation between communicants. Pragmatic cohesion in the political discourse of parliamentary debates facilitates reaching communicative goals in the interactions between participants. The markers of pragmatic cohesion are various types of implications forming implicit text: subtext, presupposition and background knowledge.

In the UK parliamentary debates communicants use different implicit means to strengthen the effect and turn listeners' attention to the presented speech:

**Mr. Skinner:** *She is the first Minister to visit all the prisons in England and Wales. When the Minister was visiting the prisons in Britain, did she take her handcuffs with her, and how many times did she bump into that well-known recidivist the Home Secretary?* (HC 20 Mar 1997: Column 1066-7).

In the range of critical remarks about the work of Minister of State for Prisons the communicant suggests the minister to take her own handcuffs while checking the prisons' state. This ironic recommendation is caused by active visits of the English and Wales prisons by the minister to check the conditions. The minister's activity created good image to the party as being reliable, seriously concerned about the people and hard-working that the opponents are doing their best to ruin. Next communicative move continues to destroy the positive image of the former authority,

as here the state secretary gets an invective nomination *well-known recidivist*. All critical remarks are presented as interrogations to better implement irony of the communicative moves and reach the goals of communication.

**Structural and compositional cohesion** primarily considers genre canons that include regularities of text invariants formation and presuppose correspondence to a certain compositional organization. The UK parliamentary debates have resistant to any norm violations or changes that reflect in compositional structure referring to prologue, course of events, culminating point, epilogue of every thematic block of the debates. These compositional elements are realized through a certain traditionally established pattern forming thematic discussions during the debates: *introductory thematic question and invitation to participate in the debates* (prologue) – *communicant's answer* (course of events) – *question from party members* (course of events) – *communicant's answer* (course of events) – *question from opposition member* (culminating point) – *communicant's answer* (culminating point) – *summarizing the discussion* (epilogue).

Cohesion is also represented by segmental and suprasegmental parameters. Comprehensive analysis of audio and video recordings of the British parliament meetings shows the importance of suprasegmental speech parameters in the political communication, as they form general rhythmic-melodic pattern of the debates. Thus, communicants' speeches are strongly emotional with the constant nuclear tones and intonation changes to emphasize the importance of some words in communication. The leading role is given to pauses that can be formal or act as an important functional unit on the basis of the contextual surrounding affecting communicative interchange between the participants of the parliamentary debates. As a result, the functions of pauses in the parliamentary interactions are the following:

1) to attract attention of communicants during the debates:

**Mr. Speaker:** *Mr. Greg Barker. [Interruption.] The hon. Gentleman had indicated that he wanted to come in on this question* (HC Deb 8 April 2010: Column 1161);

2) to highlight respectful attitude towards some participants of the debates:

Sir Edward, may I say how delighted we are that you are back as leader – *[Interruption.]* – as Father of the House.

3) to emphasize importance, significance of the presented information:

*He does not understand the achievements of private prisons and is about 10 years behind the times. He is driven by Labour ideology and would do well to look at the increase in rehabilitation. [Interruption.]* (HC Deb 20 March 1997: Column 1058);

4) to remember important data, figures, percentage in speech for better argumentation that is typical for the British parliamentary debates where the usage of some prepared notes is forbidden:

**The Prime Minister:** *What we need is a country where work genuinely pays, and that is why what our proposals do is reform welfare, but at the same time bring in a national living wage which will mean that anyone on the lowest rate of pay will get a £20-a-week pay rise next year. That is why the figures show that a family – [Interruption.] I do not want to blind the House with statistics, but I will give just two* (HC Deb 16 Sep 2015: Column 1039).

5) to follow the order of the topics discussed during the parliamentary debates:

**Mr Andrew Turner (Isle of Wight) (Con):** *The Isle of Wight zoo is having difficulty importing a tiger. She was cruelly treated in a circus and has now been kept in isolation for nearly two years, despite Belgium being wholly free from rabies. Will my right hon. Friend assist in breaking through this bureaucratic logjam?*

**The Prime Minister:** *I will certainly do anything I can to help my – [Interruption.]*

**Mr Speaker:** *Order. I want to hear about the tiger* (HC Deb 16 Sep 2015: Column 1042).

6) to regulate deviations from the topic under discussion:

**Jonathan Edwards (Carmarthen East and Dinefwr) (PC):** *Over the summer, it was reported that electrification of the Great Western line was costing four times more per mile than the UK's last major infrastructure project, the east coast main line, which was completed in 1991. [Interruption.] One reason for the escalating costs are the compensation payments to train operators, which did not arise in the case of the east coast main line because the service was in public ownership.*

7) to focus attention on the information for getting consent, agreement or critical remarks:

**Jonathan Edwards (Carmarthen East and Dinefwr) (PC):** *With the cost to the public purse now reportedly £1 billion more than projected, does the Secretary of State believe that the schedule 4 payments are justified, and does he agree that the profit-for-dividend model must be taken out of rail services? [Interruption.]* (HC Deb 16 Sep 2015: Column 1034).

**Conclusions.** The British parliamentary debates are always conducted on the basis of strict traditions, norms and rules, and any deviations from these regulations cannot be accepted. Following the long-established norms and rules provide effective parliamentary work in the UK reflecting the political

life in the country. As a result, the genre model of the debates encompasses various types of cohesion supplying the linear structure of the parliamentary procedures. The perspective of further researches is to study other discourse categories inherent in the political discourse of the UK parliamentary debates.

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#### П'єцух О. І. КОГЕЗІЯ ЯК БАЗОВА ДИСКУРСИВНА КАТЕГОРІЯ У БРИТАНСЬКИХ ПАРЛАМЕНТСЬКИХ ДЕБАТАХ

Цю статтю присвячено комплексному дослідженню втілення дискурсивно-текстової категорії когезії в політичному дискурсі парламентських дебатів у Сполученому Королівстві Великої Британії та Північної Ірландії. Аналіз різноманітних особливостей, притаманних британським парламентським дебатам, передбачає залучення міждисциплінарного підходу, який охоплює дослідження у межах дискурсології, соціолінгвістики, етнопсихології, а також політології та культурології. Парламентські дебати формують особливий тип мовленнєвого жанру, який характеризується семантичними, прагматичними, функціональними, організаційними та структурними особливостями. Формування політичного дискурсу парламентських дебатів у Сполученому Королівстві Великої Британії та Північної Ірландії відбувається на основі різних типів когезії, які включають референційну, конотативну, метафорично-асоціативну, прагматичну, структурну та композиційну когезію. Усі типи когезії, характерні для мовленнєвого жанру політичного дискурсу парламентських дебатів у Сполученому Королівстві Великої Британії та Північної Ірландії, сприяють забезпеченню і регуляції процесуальності, точності і традиційності під час проведення обговорень членами парламенту. Детально розглянуто специфічні лінгвістичні особливості формування та функціонування когезійних засобів, які забезпечують оперування учасниками дебатів мовними засобами для успішності обговорення політичних, фінансових та соціальних проблем під час засідань Палати Громад британського парламенту у період пост-Тетчеризму незалежно від провладної партії. У цій статті також розглянуто екстралінгвістичні риси, які охоплюють події та явища політичної, економічної та соціальної сфер британського суспільства. У проведеному дослідженні ґрунтовно вивчено протоколи засідань учасників парламентських дебатів у Сполученому Королівстві Великої Британії та Північної Ірландії.

**Ключові слова:** політичний дискурс, парламентські дебати, мовленнєвий жанр, когезія, паузація, тематичність, серіальність, члени парламенту.