SPEECH ACTS OF CONTROL IN ENGLISH DOMINANT PARENTAL DISCOURSE

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The paper deals with typology, functioning and verbal representation of speech acts of control in English dominant parental discourse. The concept of speech acts of control has been clarified then directive of order, directive of demand, directive of prohibition and directive of warning types have been singled out. The analysis of linguistic forms of directive of order, directive of demand, directive of prohibition and directive of warning utilized by parents in dominant communication has been carried out. The analysis of the control speech acts by levels of directness in dominant discourse reveals the prevalence of direct mode stipulated by parental higher social position and authority. It was found out that linguistic forms of directives of order are affirmative imperative constructions and negative imperative constructions, lexicogrammatical level of directives of order are represented by imperative sentences comprising verbs that call for action completion or denote action cessation. It was revealed that when conveying categorical requirements, impolite and even disrespectful attitude, directives of order include negative-evaluative adjectives, obscene words. Linguistic expression of directives of demand are affirmative utterances containing volitional verbs. Directives of prohibition in dominant parental discourse are represented by affirmative constructions with verbs naming ban and disallowance. The category of modality is also employed for verbal representation of the directive of prohibition. The directives of warning are represented by imperative and affirmative constructions with modal verbs of obligation, negative imperative constructions and affirmative constructions with prohibitive nomination, negative constructions of egocentric character. The analysis of the lexical and syntactic means that comprise speech acts of control makes it possible to single out structural models containing addressing. This paper aims to compensate for the lacunae that are currently present in the field of English dominant parental parental discourse study in terms of speech act representation.

Key words: speech acts of control, directive of order, directive of demand, directive of prohibition, directive of warning, imperative construction, affirmative construction, English dominant parental discourse.

Introduction. The modern linguistic studies are focusing on discourse pragmatics that involves principles and terms of interaction, communicative strategies and tactics utilized in a number of socially meaningful situations, where family communication influences all aspects of life and socio-communicative activities of the individual. The behavior of communicators as a social interaction is formed due to the objectives and regulated by the principles and norms, realized according to the strategies and tactics of speech interaction that are represented by certain speech acts. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in discovering aspects of directive speech acts in a varied institutional and non-institutional discourse. The issue of qualitative representation of directive speech acts types in movies has received critical attention [1; 2; 3; 4]. The considerable work has been also devoted to verbal means of the directive speech acts realization with emphasis on word-forming and functional features of verbs employed in speech acts [5], directive types and their linguistic forms [6; 7; 8], semantic and structural characteristics of directives in
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discourse are upbringing and socializing as well as
role and status preponderance. The objectives of parental
manifest authority and social power based on age,
and compulsion in the parental discourse [13].

Materials and methods. The aim of this study is to clarify
the notion of speech act of control and single out varieties
of directives representing it in dominant parental discourse,
as well as to analyze their linguistic forms with emphasis on
employed verbs. To achieve the aim the following methods
were applied: the interpretive-textual analysis was used to
current paper.

Discussion. Communicative domination is defined as
the ability of a communicative leader to control the partner’s
speech and non-speech behavior in the process of interaction
[14, p. 74]. The dominance is treated as a sociolinguistic
category, where the central core is represented by
linguistic means of verbalization of the concept of power,
and its peripheral zone includes the discursive embodiment
of asymmetric communicative relations [15]. Thus,
dominance is determined by higher social status, actualizing
the right of the speaker to influence, impose and control.
English dominant parental discourse is viewed as a family
communication involving parents and their children when
parents’ manifest authority and social power based on age,
role and status preponderance. The objectives of parental
discourse are: upbringing and socializing as well as
knowledge transference and skills development. Parents’
desire to always take initiative, to fully control child’s
thoughts and actions revealed in their communicative
dominance. The communicative dominance in parental
discourse also involves the demonstration of initiative,
turn-taking, topic control.

Speech act is an elementary component
of communication, presupposing that “we do something
in saying something” [16, p. 12]. According to Speech
Act Theory it is a three-component formation. The speech
act in relation to the language used for its performance is
a locutionary act. The speech act in relation to the purpose
and a number of conditions of its implementation is
an illocutionary act [17]. The speech act due to the influence
it exerts on the addressee is treated as a perlocutionary act.
Depending on whether it is attached to illocution, they
distinguish associated and non-associated perlocution. The
former is in parallel with the illocution of a certain type,
they are caused by illocution and propositional content
of the speech act. The latter is not tied to illocutionary types
and usually has only proposed character [18, p. 193–194].
The influence is included in the speaker’s intention as a
perlocution purpose. The illocutionary aim is to express
the action by which this influence is carried out [19]. The set
of perlocution and illocution purposes is the communicative
intention of the speaker. Intention causes the intensification
of the mental scheme of speech action, which with
the participation of discursive tactics and a discursive
context causes the choice of means of implementation
of the speech act [18, p. 189]. J. Serl’s speech acts typology
is based on an illocutionary goal of expression therefore he
distinguishes assertive, commission, directive, declarative,
expressive speech acts [17]. Other typologies that have
been developed on speech acts also include directives
(D. Wunderlich, K. Bach and M. Harnish, B. Fraser,
G. Leech, G. Pochepsyv).
The category of directiveness is two-folded. On the one
hand, it denotes the directive modality, the main form
of which is the imperative morphological form of the verb,
and on the other – the category of communicative directive,
which is characterized by a special functional type of
a sentence – the imperative sentence [20, p. 7]. Directives’
illocutionary purpose is in making the listener to perform
an action. At the heart of the directive lies the speaker’s
will. According to Searle, there are five types of directive
speech acts; command, request, permission, prohibition
and question. According to Yule [23, p. 53] directive speech
act is classified into command / order, request, invitation,
warning, prohibition, and suggestion. And we use Yule’s
classification as basic in the current paper.
Ervin-Tripp defines social control acts as utterances
designed to bring about a change in the behavior of the other
[22]. In this paper the term speech acts of control is used to
describe directive acts that are employed by parents
in English dominant parental discourse to realize their
communicative intentions of social and situational control.
Shoshana Blum-Kulka in her article on politeness in family
discourse discusses modes of control acts. The direct mode
is expressed by explicit naming of the act to be performed;
the conventionally indirect mode is expressed via questions
in regard to the preparatory conditions needed to perform
the act, as conventionalized in any given language;
the non-conventional indirect mode, expressed by hints
[23, p. 8]. The analysis of the control speech acts by
levels of directness in dominant parental discourse reveals
the prevalence of direct mode. The analysis of the directive
speech act is focused on the utterances utilized by parents
interacting with their children in situations of dominance
characterized by verbal and non-verbal confrontation,
criticism of opponent’s activity or personality, an emotional
breakdown between speakers; increase of emotional and spatial distance between participants, deliberate accentuation of parental status. The findings show that there are four types of directive speech acts commonly used by parents in dominant family communication. They are order, demand, prohibition and warning; the choices are determined by situational factors.

The directive of order is characterized by a categorical assertion and obligation to perform an action as the speaker exerts overall control. The key element of the directive utterance is a verb denoting a required action: “Tell me how long this has been going on, Abby. Be honest”, Leonie commanded her (C. Kelly, p. 536).

Structural-semantic types of utterances that represent directives of order are imperative sentences of affirmative and negative forms that convey the necessity of action completion or keeping from its completion: “Danny!” hissed his mother. “Keep your voice down. We’re not here to assess their net worth. Don’t turn the plates upside down to see where they came from” (C. Kelly, p. 363).

Directive of order that requires completion of a physical action my preface speech acts of request employed for developing the conversation: “Sit down, boy – said father; not raising his eyes. – You were a help to your mother and sister in closing the house?” Yes, Father, said boy” (A. Burgess).

Within the directive speech act of order represented by imperative utterance, insistence is enhanced by non-verbal components of a prosodic type: Kate said firmly, “Annie, open the door! You can be quiet, but I must see you!” There was no answer to this (C. Cookson, p. 235).

Parents use speech acts of control for child’s guidance when providing instructions concerning actions of a household nature. When interacting with preschool and primary school children, the direct mode turns out to be preferable, due to the higher social position and authority that replace all sorts of arguments: “I’m nipping to the shops”. “Okay, okay…I told you I was sorry.” Oliver nodded. “I don’t want to hear anything through the ceiling this afternoon, apart from the sound of sweat dripping onto textbook” (Script – Educator, p. 67). Indirect mode of order actualization in a special question form that functions as a rhetoric question in compliance with affirmative sentence that informs about child’s turn to fulfill the household chore signal the requirement to complete the action immediately: “Melanie, Abigail and Daniel!” yelled Leonie. “Why is this house such a pit? It’s your turn to tidy up. Twenty minutes each, that’s all I’m asking for” (C. Kelly).

The directive of prohibition is a preventive act based on a presupposition that an addressee has an intention to perform an action that is undesirable for the speaker [5, p. 87]. The semantics of the prohibition is represented by lexical and grammatical means of the category of negation. Directives of prohibition in dominant parental discourse are represented by affirmative constructions with verbs naming ban and disallowance: “And you know damn well you’re not allowed to go out on a school night. You pull that again and you are grounded for two weeks. Got that, mister?” “Okay, okay… I told you I was sorry.” Oliver nodded. "The boy looked odd (D. Steel: Daddy, p. 107). To address the child parents use you – pronoun in passive constructions that convey the idea of parents’ dominance when children are treated as objects of influence. Elliptical interrogative constructions are utilized to get the confirm that the child got the banning message and accepts the punishment.

The category of modality is also employed for verbal representation of the directive of prohibition. Subjective modality, represented by combination of modal verb of semantics of allowance with negative particle not, provide the categorical denial You can’t have any more. Linguistic means of categories of modality provide argumentation in the representation of the speaker’s position. To understand intensifiers and obscene words reveal his aggression. The speaker clearly explicates the norms that are not violated and use the adverb only, while elliptical sentences enhance expressiveness and emotiveness of directives.

If linguistic expression of directives contains markers of requests will+you + imperative form, intention of order is conveyed by the choice of rude way of telling a daughter to keep silent and intonation of anger and discontent: “You can’t make me go to church”, Brenda said. “I ain’t got nothing to wear, and you know it” “Brenda, will you shut your mouth?” his mother said sharply: then more wearily, “We got a lot more than Easter clothes to worry about” (K. Paterson, p. 46).

Parents dominance is also revealed in directives of demand when they call for doing something in an authoritarian way. The directive is represented by I want you construction the key element of which is a volitional verb. It is followed by the affirmative containing the evaluative adjective that refers to child’s age and functions as a marker of insufficient adulthood and inability to make responsible decisions: “I want you to do it immediately! You are too small to understand the real importance of it for your future” (E. Blair).

The directive is also represented by I don’t want construction: “I’ve got an English essay to do by tomorrow morning”. ” I don’t want to hear anything through the ceiling this afternoon, apart from the sound of sweat dripping onto textbook” (Script – Educator, p. 67). Indirect mode of order actualization in a special question form that functions as a rhetoric question in compliance with affirmative sentence that informs about child’s turn to fulfil the household chore signal the requirement to complete the action immediately: “Melanie, Abigail and Daniel!” yelled Leonie. “Why is this house such a pit? It’s your turn to tidy up. Twenty minutes each, that’s all I’m asking for” (C. Kelly).
his argumentation on the general background of motivation, the speaker attracts the modality of the possibility You might want, which is limited by the conjunction of the opposition of but. “But I want”, sobbed Ronan, snot and tears all over his trembling chin. “But I want, Mum. I want, I want, I want”.

“You can’t have any more, Ronan. You might want but you can’t have, okay? You’ve had enough, all right? You’ll be sick if you have any more today. You can have some more tomorrow, if you’re a good boy and eat up all your dinner”.

“But I want now, Mum, I want right now”. “You’re not getting any more and that’s final. So shut it, Ronan” (T. Parsons, p. 86).

As directive is intended at action completion it is of vital importance to check in comprehension. Therefor parents use metacommunicative utterances Okay, All Right to get the feedback from children, that contributes to the efficiency of directives:

Parents resort to speech acts of control to put some restrictions of child’s freedom to move outside the place of living until the desired action is performed. In a direct mode using present-continuous-structures, the negative form of verbs with the semantics of permission or motion not letting, parents realize their dominance: “Who is he?” her father shouted at her again and again. “I’m not letting you out of this room until you tell me” (D. Steel: The Gift, p. 90).

In English parental dominant discourse, we observe combination of speech acts of control. Thus, the directive of prohibition is followed by directive of order: “It’s okay, Mel…it’s pink…you’ll like it…” “I don’t like it. I’m not moving here. I’ll stay with Carole and Debbie”.

“No, you won’t”. Oliver’s voice was quiet and firm. “You’ll move here with the rest of us. And I’ve gotten you into excellent school” (D. Steel: Daddy, p. 170).

**Directive of warning** is represented by imperative form of the intransitive phrasal verb that means being careful are used by parents to notify children about danger: “He brought the razor blades back, showed Lindsey how to change them, and gave her a few pointers on how best to shave. “Watch out for the ankle and the knee,” he said. “Your mother always called those the danger spots” (A. Sebold, p. 158).

Parents may preface the directive of warning with utterances containing negative particles to convey the idea of disapproval. The directive of warning is represented by you+should not construction: “It’s not such a good idea. I don’t like it. You shouldn’t be so careless. Are you in love with Peter?” (A. Frank).

Parents exploit the right to monitor and supervise different aspects of children’s life, to influence them by imposing opinions, values, ideas when combining acts of control of the certain types: directive of prohibition, directive of order, directive of demand: “Do you want me to stay with the nuns?” she asked, hoping he would tell her she could stay at home. Living at the convent away from her family terrified her. But if he told her to leave, she had nowhere else to go. “You can’t stay here,” her father said firmly, “and you can’t keep the baby. Go to the Sisters of Charity, give up the baby, and then come home”. And then he dealt the final blow to her soul. “I don’t want to see you until then. And I don’t want you seeing your mother or your sister” (D. Steel: The Gift, p. 93). To verbalize a particular desire parents involve negative imperative constructions, affirmative constructions with prohibitive nomination, negative constructions of egocentric character. They use emotionally-colored vocabulary with negatively evaluative nature to intensify the dominant nature of interaction.

To get the attention of children while actualizing speech acts of control parents use addressing and resort to the following structures:

a) name+ infinitive: Annie, open the door

b) infinitive + boy Sit down, boy

c) you + imperative: you speak when I tell you to speak

d) I + negative form + want + infinitive+ you: I don’t want to see you

e) you+ negative form of modal verbs+ infinitive: You can’t stay here.

f) you+ negative form of modal verbs+ to be+ adjective: You shouldn’t be so careless.

g) I’m + negative form + verb ing+ you: I’m not letting you out of this room.

Thus, a variety of addressing are represented by personal names, gender nominations, you-nominations.

**Results.** These findings suggest that speech acts of control are directives employed by parents in English dominant parental discourse for manifesting their authority and power while realizing intentions of social and situational control. Types of directive speech acts functioning in English dominant parental discourse are directive of order, directive of demand, directive of prohibition and directive of warning. The evidence from the study indicates that the basic structural types of speech acts of order are imperative sentences of affirmative and negative forms. The directives of demand are represented by affirmative constructions containing evaluative adjectives, while affirmative constructions of directives of prohibition contain lexical and grammatical means of the category of negation. The directives of warning are represented by imperative and affirmative contractions with modal verbs of obligation. Speech acts of control are marked by the usage of non-verbal components of prosodic type. The results of the study also indicate that directive acts of control contain addressing to children employed by parents in English dominant parental discourse.

The perspective research endeavors in this framework can be focused on the study of speech acts variability employed by parents and their children in English partnership parental discourse with regard to gender and age factors.

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