МОВОЗНАВСТВО. ЛІТЕРАТУРОЗНАВСТВО

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STRATEGIC MODELS OF CRITICAL REMARKS IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE RESEARCH ARTICLES IN PSYCHOLOGY

The article presents a comprehensive study of the strategic models of critical remarks in the leading genre of the English-language scientific discourse, that is the article. Critical remarks function as important means of realising the author's communicative goal of engaging in a scientific dialogue by revising, supplementing, or correcting existing knowledge. Critical remarks are viewed as a component of the rhetorical organisation of scientific discourse, that fulfils not only an evaluative, but also a cognitive function, as they contribute to the identification of new areas of research, ensure the quality of scientific argumentation, and serve as a tool for clarifying or rethinking previous findings. The study is based on the analysis of a corpus of authentic English-language research articles in psychology.

The main focus is on the analysis of two strategic models of criticism implemented through the corresponding tactics: tactic of scientific enquiry optimisation ("Unperformed action") and tactic of scientific knowledge optimisation ("Action performed poorly").

Each of the tactics is realized in the English-language research articles on psychology through specific formal, structural, semantic, and pragmatic techniques. In particular, the article analyses features of critical remarks, such as their degree of extendedness, expansion, compositional structure, typical lexical, lexico-grammatical, implicit means that express negative evaluation or indicate shortcomings or unexplored areas, and pragmatic markers.

It was found that the tactic of scientific enquiry optimisation, which typically involves identifying knowledge gaps, is often presented through impersonal, extended or unextended critical remarks located primarily in the introduction or the main body of the research article. Instead, the tactic of scientific knowledge optimisation, which focuses on highlighting specific shortcomings of existing studies, is typically reflected in the critical remarks with various level of detail and argumentative support, often appearing in a dedicated subsection such as Limitations.

The study concludes that critical remarks in English-language research articles in psychology is a multifaceted tool that plays a crucial role in the construction of meaning and the advancement of scientific discourse.

Key words: *English-language scientific discourse, research article in psychology, criticism, critical remark, strategy, tactic, technique.*

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СТРАТЕГІЧНІ МОДЕЛІ КРИТИЧНИХ ЗАУВАЖЕНЬ В АНГЛОМОВНИХ НАУКОВИХ СТАТТЯХ З ПСИХОЛОГІЇ

У статті здійснено комплексне дослідження стратегічних моделей критичних зауважень у провідному жанрі англомовного наукового дискурсу – статті, котрі функціонують як важливі засоби реалізації комунікативної

мети автора – включення у науковий діалог шляхом перегляду, доповнення або коригування наявного знання. Критичні зауваження розглянуто як складову риторичної організації наукового дискурсу, що виконує не лише оціночну, але й когнітивну функцію, оскільки сприяє актуалізації нових напрямів дослідження, забезпечує якість наукової аргументації та слугує інструментом уточнення або переосмислення попередніх результатів. Дослідження базується на аналізі корпусу автентичних англомовних наукових статей з психології.

Основну увагу зосереджено на аналізі двох стратегічних моделей критики, що реалізуються через відповідні тактики: тактику оптимізації наукового пізнання («Нездійснена дія») та тактику оптимізації наукового знання («Дія здійснена погано»).

В англомовних наукових статтях з психології кожна з тактик реалізується через відповідні формально-структурні, змістові та прагматичні прийоми. Зокрема, аналізуються характеристики критичних зауважень, як-от ступінь поширеності критичних зауважень, розгорнутість, композиційна організація, а також типові лексичні, лексико-граматичні та імпліцитні засоби, що вербалізують негативну оцінку у критичних зауваженнях, прагматичні маркери.

З'ясовано, що тактика оптимізації наукового пізнання, що передбачає виявлення прогалин у знанні, часто реалізується у вигляді безособових, згорнутих або розгорнутих критичних зауважень, що розміщуються переважно в інтродуктивному чи змістовому блоці наукової статті. Натомість тактика оптимізації наукового знання, зосереджена на виявленні конкретних недоліків уже наявних досліджень, що відображено у критичних зауваженнях як різного рівня поширеності та аргументованості, часто у вигляді окремого підрозділу Limitations.

Зроблено висновок, що критичні зауваження в англомовних наукових статтях з психології є багатоаспектним інструментом, що виконує важливу роль у конструюванні смислів та розвитку наукового дискурсу.

Ключові слова: англомовний науковий дискурс, наукова стаття з психології, критика, критичне зауваження, стратегія, тактика, прийом.

Introducing the problem. In the modern world, where English has acquired the status of an international language of science and research plays an increasingly important role in the development of mankind, linguists are paying more and more attention to the study of various features of modern English-language scientific discourse, including its genres (Swales, 1990), the most prominent of which is the research article (Swales, 1990; Яхонтова, 2009). One of the essential components of the modern English-language research article is scientific criticism, which is realized in the research article through critical remarks.

Analysis of recent research. Researchers have already examined linguistic features of criticism in scientific discourse (Crossed Words, 2011; Fagan, Martin Martin, 2004; Salager-Meyer, 2001), described the potential of formal, structural, content and pragmatic characteristics of critical remarks (Балацька, 2013a; Балацька, 2014a; Балацька, 2014b; Балацька, 2014c), and studied strategic models of criticism in the English-language research article in general (Балацька, 2013b). However, the peculiarities of strategic models of criticism, tactics and techniques used for their implementation in English-language research articles across different disciplines, in particular in psychology, still require thorough investigation.

Purpose of the research. The purpose of this article is to analyse strategic models of critical remarks in English-language research articles in psychology.

Materials of the study. The research material consists of 126 critical remarks selected from 35 research articles in psychology, published in electronic academic journals in the USA and the UK.

Presentation of the main material. We define criticism or critical remark (CR) as "a verbally expressed negative attitude of the author toward a particular (fragment of) scientific research" (Балацька, 2013a:1). We consider the tactics of criticism to be strategic models, of which, in our opinion, there are two in English-language research articles in psychology (ELRAP), as well as in English-language research articles in other scientific disciplines.

The first model – the tactic of scientific enquiry optimisation (41.81% of all the CRs in ELRAP) corresponds to the first modification of the conceptual model of scientific criticism ('Unperformed Action') (Балацька, 2013b). This tactic is aimed at correcting a specific violation: insufficient knowledge. It therefore has a stimulating effect on the development of scientific thought, i.e., it optimises the process of cognition. Researchers point to the existence of this tactic, arguing that criticism serves to generate new knowledge by eliminating gaps in scientific understanding referred to as "knowledge gap" (Fagan, Martin Martin, 2004:126). They also emphasize that this tactic addresses not only the broader issue of filling this gap, but also the more specific objective of the author: the formation of a scientific niche.

The second model – the tactic of scientific knowledge optimisation (58.19% of all the CRs in ELRAP) is based on the second modification of the conceptual model of criticism known as "Action performed poorly" (Балацька, 2013b). This tactic is aimed at correcting shortcomings identified in existing studies – specifically, flaws and defects in the scientific research itself or in its verbal representation (text). In this way, this tactic stimulates elimination

of deficiencies, thereby enhancing the quality of available scientific enquiry. The techniques involved in implementing the tactic of scientific enquiry optimisation in CRs in ELRAP relate to formal and structural characteristics of CRs. Thus, CRs can be extended / unextended (i.e., represented through one or more critical utterances), compressed / expanded (i.e., the CR can contain only the main part – a negative evaluative utterance – or the main and additional parts), contact / distant (i.e., the critical utterances of the CR can be positioned directly one after another or be separated by non-critical utterances), compositionally homogenous / heterogeneous (i.e., whether the CR is placed in one / two compositional parts of the ELRAP) (Балацька, 2014c). These characteristics have demonstrated to be strategically and tactically relevant.

– In particular, the absence of an additional part in the CR, i.e., compressed CR (60.87% of all CRs in ELRAP that implement the tactic of scientific enquiry optimisation), in which case the author, implementing the CR, corrects the identified deficiency by studying the object or subject that has not been (sufficiently) investigated before. For example, in CR (1), it is noted that the chosen research object has not been sufficiently studied:

(1) *To our knowledge, only two previous studies have examined the relationship between credit card debt and health-related characteristics among college students.*[34, 35]

– The presence of an additional part (i.e., expanded CRs) (39.13% of all CRs in ELRAP that implement the tactic of scientific enquiry optimisation), in which the author indicates the need or ways to eliminate the identified violation, e.g.:

(2) *Findings from this study indicate the need for further research among this population in two primary areas. First, additional focus groups should be held to explore the experiences of culturally and racially diverse family members of veterans, minor siblings of veterans, and family members who have joined formal organizations, such as Blue Star Mothers and Military Families Speak Out. Second, in addition to gathering qualitative data, surveys and scales to assess physical ailments, mental disorders (i.e., anxiety and depression), and help seeking behaviors should be implemented.*

In the additional part of this CR, the author indicates how the object under study could be better investigated.

– Compositional characteristic: the CR is predominantly presented through compositionally homogeneous model (85% of CRs in ELRAP implementing the tactic of scientific enquiry optimisation). These are primarily located in the introduction of the ELRAP (52.7%) or the main part of the ELRAP (30.56%). The placement of the CR in the introduction of the ELRAP is intended to fulfil such a specific task of optimising scientific enquiry as the formation of a scientific niche for conducting one's own research, e.g.:

(3) *According to this hypothesis, the unusual brain size is due to the adaptation to a more complex social life (Barton and Dunbar, 1997; Byrne and Whiten, 1988; Dunbar, 1998), however, the exact social skills that resulted in this have not been clarified yet.*

Instead, the technique of implementing CRs in the main body of the ELRAP optimises scientific cognition and fulfils a different function, specifically, it draws attention to the need to close knowledge gaps due to, for example, the significance of a certain object or the inability to refute or confirm a particular postulate because of insufficient knowledge, e. g.:

(4) *Also, the goal of the study was to identify participants with a diagnosis of schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder, but better attention should have been given to comorbid diagnoses as many people had, or likely had, other diagnoses, either other Axis I diagnoses (particularly substance use disorders) or Axis II diagnoses (e.g., personality disorders).*

The tactic of scientific enquiry optimisation is also based on the semantic characteristics of the CRs, including:

– impersonality (absence of verbal objectification of the specific scientist whose work is being criticised), which is typical for the vast majority of CRs employing this tactic. This aligns with the meaning of 'Unperformed action', which refers to the scientific community as a whole (i.e., the action was not performed by anyone in particular);

– objectification of such a content component of the subject area 'Scientific activity' as a "Problem" / "Topic", the insufficient investigation of which is indicated by the author of the CR;

– explicit/implicit means of expressing negative evaluation.

Among the explicit lexical means (which account for 37.94% of all means of negative evaluation expression in the CR in ELRAP using the tactic of scientific enquiry optimisation), the most frequent are adjectives (10.84%) (*limited, incomplete, unclear, insufficient, little, small, unclear*), nouns (10.84%) (*gap, lack, neglect, paucity*), verbs (10.84%) (*fail, neglect, overlook*), and adverbs (5.42%) (*few, less, only*). Among the explicit lexico-grammatical means (20.68% of all means of expressing negative evaluation in CRs in ELRAP using the tactic of

scientific enquiry optimisation), the most common are negation of compound verbal predicate, implemented by the model using the auxiliary verb *have* in the Present Perfect + not + main verb (6.9%) (e.g., *have not been clarified yet; have not been examined; has not been researched; have not been widely discussed; have not been studied*); negation of compound verbal predicate, realized by the model using the auxiliary verb *do* in the present or past tense + not + main verb (3.45%) (e.g., *research did not examine*); negation of the complement using the model (formal) subject + be, etc. + no + complement (3.45%) (e.g., *although there is no literature on sex differences*), negation of the subject, carried out according to the model: negator (no) + subject (1.73%) (e.g., *no other study has examined*); negation of compound nominal predicate using the model verb *be* in the present or past tense + not + adjective (1.73%) (e.g., *it's not clear*).

The main implicit means (41.38% of all means of expressing negative evaluation in CRs in ELRAP using the tactic of scientific enquiry optimisation) include linguistic units with positive or neutral semantics, which when combined in context, impart a negative evaluative meaning to the utterance (10.35%) (e.g., *deserves systematic investigation; better attention should have been given*); linguistic units with futuristic semantics (*future, further*) in combination with linguistic units denoting elements of the conceptual sphere of *scientific research* and modal verbs (10.35%) (e.g., *future research should consider; future research might shed light; ought to be evaluated in further research*); linguistic units with futuristic semantics combined with units denoting elements of the conceptual field of *scientific research* and verbs indicating the need for further development of the problem (e.g., *further research is needed; further work is required to determine; requires further investigation*), as well as verbs expressing the need for further actions (3.45%) (e.g., *need to consider*):

. Another technique of the tactic of scientific enquiry optimisation is the use of pragmatic markers, which include hedges and boosters.

In particular, this strategy is marked by the prevalence of hedges, reflecting the perception that the lack of knowledge, although evaluated negatively, is a natural outcome of the infinite nature of the cognitive process. This is evidenced by the high frequency of hedges (89.87% of CRs involving the tactic of scientific enquiry optimisation). Among the most common hedges are passive voice (e.g., *have not been examined; have not been studied; have not been identified*), approximators, including quantitative adverbs, adverbs of degree, frequency, and time (e.g., *few studies have been conducted;*

needs more research), modal verbs expressing possibility or probability (e.g., *future research might shed light; should explore*), temporal deixis (e.g., *have not been clarified yet*), expressions verbalising the author's personal doubts about their knowledge (e.g., *to our knowledge, only two previous studies have examined*), linking verbs (*there seems to be no academic literature*), etc.

At the same time, although much less frequent (15.6%), boosters are also used within this tactic – often accompanied by hedges – when the author wants to emphasise the low degree of study or the importance of the issue. These include: adverbs (*completely, very, actually*), and adjectives (*important, necessary*) (e.g., *we do not actually know; several important questions remain unanswered; it is necessary to study*).

The tactic of scientific knowledge optimisation, based on the second modification of the stereotypical scenario of scientific criticism ("Action performed poorly"), is oriented toward correcting shortcomings identified in existing research – be they flaws in the scientific research itself or its verbal representation (text) (Балацька, 2013b). Thus, this tactic actively promotes the elimination of these shortcomings, contributing to the optimization of available scientific knowledge.

The tactic of scientific knowledge optimisation (58.19% of all the CRs in ELRAP) also includes a number of techniques that are all aimed at improving scientific knowledge by pointing out the shortcomings, errors, and omissions made by scientists during their scientific activities.

The techniques of this tactic involve the use of certain formal and structural characteristics of the CR, namely:

– Unextended and compressed CRs (54.68% of all CRs in ELRAP that implement the tactic of scientific knowledge optimisation), which address a specific task – identifying a minor deficiency, as perceived by the author of the CR. For example:

(5) *Still, most of the studies mentioned do not distinguish between minor and severe injuries but rather treat all injuries, mostly reported through parents' self-report measures, as one.*

– Expanded and extended CRs (43.75%), designed to address a more significant shortcoming, in the author's opinion, by:

• Drawing attention to the identified shortcoming through detailed description, which is particularly common for shortcomings classified as limitations. In this case, the author of the CR lists all the limitations present in a particular study, sometimes organizing this into a separate structural section within the ELRAP, titled accordingly *Limitations*.

• Justification of the reasons for the negative evaluation and/or suggestions for eliminating the identified deficiency in the additional part of the CR:

(6) *Study Limitations*

This study has four main limitations. First, the sample used did not include all categories of trainee teachers at UBD. Only student teachers on one course taught by the researcher participated in the study. Second, the causes of depression, anxiety and stress are many but only a few factors (gender and programme of study) were investigated as independent variables in the present study.

– Compositionally homogeneous CRs (96.5% of all CRs implementing the tactic of scientific knowledge optimisation), located mainly in the main body of the ELRAP, as it is here that the achievements of existing experience become relevant and, accordingly, their shortcomings are revealed. For example:

(7) *It is important to note a number of limitations with the current survey. This was a telephone survey which only contacted private households. As a result, others such as refugees, homeless people, and people who live in sheltered accommodation may not have been included. Furthermore, no distinction was made between the various types of medication such as major and minor tranquillizers or antipsychotics or anxiolytics, which limits further investigation into factors that predict use of particular medication subgroups. It is possible that certain subgroups of the population may be more likely to be prescribed particular subgroups of psychotropic medication.*

The techniques of the tactic of scientific knowledge optimisation also include the use of content models of CRs, namely:

– Generalized (impersonal) CRs (46.5% of CRs) are used when there is an additional task – to indicate the typicality of the identified shortcoming as being inherent in the scientific community as a whole.

– Group-specific CRs (3.2% of CRs) implement the same task, but indicate a less typical deficiency: one inherent in representatives of a certain approach or supporters of a certain theory, i.e. a separate group of scientists.

– Author-specific CRs (40.3% of CRs) are also designed to implement this task, but with the opposite meaning – to indicate the atypicality of the deficiency, attributing it to a particular researcher(s) or when describing the shortcomings in one's own research.

– The content components of the subject area 'Scientific activity' are intended to specify the identified shortcoming by correlating it with one of the elements of scientific activity: methodology (28.13%), results (23.44%), theory (19.88%), data (14.06%), hypothesis (5.12%), conclusions (4.69%), text (3.12%), and research (1.06%).

– The semantic type of explicit evaluation, recorded in the vast majority of implementations of the tactic of scientific knowledge optimisation (87.3% of all the CRs in ELRAP that implement this tactic), is intended to clearly indicate the identified shortcoming, which is necessary for its recognition and correction.

Among the explicit lexical items (59.87% of all the means of expressing negative evaluation in the CR in ELRAP that implement the tactic of scientific knowledge optimisation), the following linguistic units prevail: adjectives (52.83%) (*incomplete, poor, misleading, unsure, inconsistent, negative*), nouns (32.07%) (*lack, constraint, overestimation, inconsistency, drawback, difficulty, limitation, shortcoming, weakness*), and verbs (15.1%) (*argue, fail, limit, overestimate*).

Among the explicit lexical and grammatical means (36.02%), the following are more frequently recorded: negation of the compound verbal predicate according to the model using auxiliary verb *do* in the present or past tense + not + main verb (8.15%) (e.g., *results do not explain; the main finding does not necessarily support; the sample used did not include all the categories*); negation of the compound verbal predicate using the model modal verb + not + main verb (7.62%) (e.g. *questionnaires cannot measure; this finding cannot be generalised; conclusion could not be made; may not be the most suitable examples*); negation of the subject according to the model negator (no, neither, not) + subject (6.14%) (e.g., *no control group was used*).

In a small number of implementations of this tactic, represented by the implicit model (4,11%), the derivation of the implicit meaning of a negative utterance is not a problem, as both the author and addressee of the CR possess sufficient knowledge of the norms and values of scientific activities and communication. For example:

(8) *Many of these treatments are evaluated in efficacy studies employing the randomized clinical trial (RCT) design. However, each one is usually assessed separately and often for specific disorders in specific settings.*

(each one is usually assessed separately and often for specific disorders in specific settings → other aspects should be taken in account → it has to be changed for the better)

At the same time, it should be noted that hedges and boosters, in our view, should not be interpreted as representing the technique(s) within the tactic of scientific knowledge optimisation. These markers are more likely to be associated with tolerance and respect for the opponent, rather than with the use of certain tactical tasks.

Conclusions. The study allows us to conclude that it is the strategic goals that ensure the coherence of verbal features of critical remarks in English-language research articles in psychology, organising their full potential to achieve particular tactical aims. It is also shown that the tactics of criticism differ not only in their specific goals but also in their underlying mental foundations. Meanwhile, their verbal resource is not strictly bounded: some models are monofunctional and correspond to one of the tactics (e.g., the compositional model), while others are multifunctional and capable of serving various purposes (e.g., the impersonal model).

Critical remarks in English-language research articles in psychology are a multifaceted tool that plays an important role in the construction of meaning and the advancement of English-language scientific discourse.

A promising direction for future research is the analysis of frequency of strategic models of critical remarks in English-language research articles from other scientific disciplines.

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