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It is common knowledge that today rhetoric skills rank among the most topical qualities of businessmen, as the mere ontology of the information society makes it inevitable for people of business to be striving for popularizing their products and services, for keeping in pace with novelties of their sphere of activities throughout the world, for attracting investors, partners and customers, as well as for opposing competitors and unfriendly mass media sources.

So, it is evident that enhancing rhetoric effectiveness of speech should make one of the top priorities in the economics and management faculties programmes of English language teaching. The purpose of the present paper is to discuss the opportunities that functional linguistics approaches open within this general precept.

Functional linguistics is aimed at disclosing the purposes and functions of language units, at revealing their pragmatic loading and effect on people’s feelings and opinions, and explaining the language “life” proceeding from meaning and function to form. Mastering at least the basics of such view on any text promotes a more profound and delicate linguistic feeling with students and helps them elaborate a more systemic and meaningful perception of speech – both their own and that of the communicating partner’s. Introducing elements of functional analysis into teaching methods, we show students the multisided semantic and
pragmatic interconnection of certain linguistic elements comprising a discourse unit.

Thus, for instance, at a lesson of English for Business Communication we discuss materials like the Transcript of a Press Conference on the International Monetary Fund’s World Economic Outlook (Washington, April 22, 2009), and state the following points.

Asking about the economic situation in Russia and its neighbours, a Russian journalist, referring to the IMF assertions that Georgia had no economic downturn (despite its appeals for economic assistance), behaved, truly speaking, quite tactlessly. His question was: “... how much of a problem is this for the IMF, the political pressure to cook the books? And does it increase in the crisis?” [Transcript of a Press Conference on the International Monetary Fund’s World Economic Outlook, http].

One can hardly expect phrases like “political pressure” and “cook the books” to be amicably perceived by the IMF officials (notwithstanding the credibility of the statement itself). No wonder, the head of the World Economic Studies Division of the IMF gave a sharp answer:

**MR. DECRESSIN: Let me take the questions in turn. Let's start with Russia. Russia is being hit by a trifecta of shocks. First, you've had the large decline in global trade. Second, you had the tightening of credit, the troubles in the banking system. Third, you had the drop in raw material prices and oil prices. So Russia, like the CIS as a whole, is experiencing the largest reversal of fortune, so to speak, among all the regions in the world [ibid].**

Leaving aside the actual economic problems in Russia, we have to point out that the linguistic characteristics of the given paragraph have acquired the following vivid peculiarities as compared to the previous speeches at the conference:

- the increased tempo of speech due to syntactic parallelism and shortening of sentence structures, their stylistic colouring, which was not typical of the previous answers
• the use of personal pronoun “you”, avoided in reference to representatives of other countries, because it makes the addressee feel his personal involvement in the critical state of things in his country
• the inclusion of the nomination “trifecta of shocks”, which enhances depressive pragmatics and was never applied to any other country irrespective of the state of things (in some cases evidently worse than in Russia) in their economy

So, it is clear that reference to “the largest reversal of fortune among all the regions in the world” was made rather as a reciprocal rebuff to the journalist’s indelicate remark than as an objective estimate of the situation in Russia. And still we admit that such a way of presenting information forms a definitely negative opinion on the question discussed, and an overview of the functional loading of the text elements exposes the speaker’s partiality.

All the above confirms that future participants in any area of the international arena have to acquire good knowledge of rhetoric devices and understanding of language functional potential.

A lot of globally significant events demonstrate the importance of the art of communication. Examples can be numerous, a classical one being the intercourse between the heads of the Soviet Union, the United States and Great Britain during the Second World War, when the need to close ranks in the face of the fierce common enemy drove them to ignoring many former discrepancies and steering a course of comradeship. The rhetoric of mutual references changed immediately.

Prime Minister W. Churchill, famous for his irreconcilable stance on socialism, nevertheless showed a truly generous nature paying tribute to the valour and heroism of the Soviet people in the highest words: The Russians fight with magnificent devotion; not only that, our generals who have visited the Russian front line report with admiration the efficiency of their military organization and the excellence of their equipment [Winston Churchill’s Speeches, p. 299-300]. And, from the very first day when they were attacked, when no one could tell how
things would go, we made a brotherhood with them, and a solemn compact to destroy Nazidom and all its works [ibid, p. 332].

So, with common sense and goodwill, even potential opponents can find a way to mutual respect and common ground, the word being one of the mightiest tools of establishing (or ruining) relationships. That, I am sure, should be the primary lesson for young diplomats and businessmen.

That is why the ESP programmes at Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO-University) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia comprise quite a number of relevant aspects.

Thus, we introduce elements of functional analysis working, for instance, at the well-known Market Leader course, which is surely one of the best Business English courses containing very good examples of cross-cultural business interaction, such as the video resource named Alliance. The story has its setting ‘between two continents’, figuratively speaking, as it is about a planned merger of two airline companies – the American TransWest Airlines and the Hong Kong-based Air Pacifica. Being well aware of the natural complications on this road, the management of the companies hire an American consultancy specializing in this kind of deals.

It is remarkable how, from the very first steps, already in her opening presentation, the representative of the consulting group Anna Valdez wins the audience with her high professionalism and, above all, outstanding communication skills. After a warm welcome she starts outlining the possible difficulties of going global for both companies, gradually intensifying the impression of the inevitable hardships of the task and the necessity for the partners to be open to a whole lot of innovations, not always easy-going. Such phrases as high risk, brutal facts, failure, only one third has a future, falls apart, differences in culture, differences in management styles and others of the like are surely aimed at preparing the listeners for the coming commitments.

But in order not to produce a totally distressing effect, the lady at the same time resorts to the positive thinking attitude (peculiar to Americans, as is known).
The rhetoric of unity and shared interests is often supported by the personal pronoun *we*; here and there Anna drops in references to *long-term success, the success we all want it to be, avoid making the same mistakes, the right balance, managing diversity*, and finishes her speech with a promise of *an exceptionally successful alliance* in case the partners accept *a willingness to change*, which met a unanimous approval of the audience.

This presentation usually makes a gripping first impression on our students. But then we have to draw their attention to the way it is structured, worded and delivered – these are the facets comprising the general effect. In the further parts of the video course there are many more episodes analyzing which we disclose the functional loading of particular lexical and structural units, stylistic devices, the systemic character of their combination aimed at actualizing the proper semantic and pragmatic meanings.

So future businessmen and politicians who plan to work at the international level should spare no effort trying to learn as much as possible about the functional significance of language units, some peculiar communication models and the possible aftereffects of their inappropriate usage.

*References*