ISSA Proceedings 2010 – Argumentation In The Appellative Genre

A speech genre lies between language and speech – it uses (a) beyond-language units (utterances, not words and sentences); (b) proto-speech units (speech models, not real speech).

The Appellative Genre (AG) is a subtype of the business kind of conventional discourse. Let me first consider the genre characteristics of conventionality in this perspective.

Identification features of business written correspondence are these:

(A) social conditionality; (B) communicative-situational conditionality; (C) speech genre conditionality; (D) linguistic conditionality.

(A) Social conditionality means that business correspondence does not only function under social conditions but also is an important component of socio-practical people's activities that presuppose the presence of social-significant tasks and situations.

(B) Communicative-situational conditionality provides for these:

(1) business interaction is implemented by means of symbolic systems (language, as a rule);

(2) the symbolic system used is functionally-oriented (i.e. it corresponds to the mode of communication, which is businesslike and written);

(3) the language system used by interlocutors is means of communication;

(4) by means of that system communicants accomplish their interrelations as prescribed by the communicative situation;

(5) interrelations between the communicants are conventional and normative;

(6) communicants' aims are mapped on their norms and conventions and accomplished by strategies, tactics and techniques of communication;

(7) the communicants have socio-cultural and psychological properties.

(C) Speech genre conditionality means that communicative-situational features are manifested depending on the specifics of a speech genre within business written communication – a speech genre is thus viewed as a conventional-

normative form of written discourse.
(D) Linguistic conditionality means that socio-cultural and psychological properties of communicants within the boundaries of a concrete speech genre are manifested in discourse by linguistic means – lexical, word-building, grammatical and para-linguistic.
Business correspondence has a number of specific linguistic features. A. O. Stebletsova (Stebletsova 2001) writes about thematic unity, sense integrity, coherence, informativity, communicative directionality, pragmaticity, modality, completeness, etc.
Besides these features, characteristic of claims and complaints within AG are:
a. textual mixing of the official and unofficial (in a personal complaint) styles;
b. pragmatic orientation at a certain addressee (at a higher-status in a complaint, at a equal-status or status-indifferent for a claim);
c. feedback orientation with predominantly non-verbal reaction;
d. mono-thematic character;
e. compositional and graphical completeness with possible use of para-graphemic elements (as in filling-out forms);
f. discourse coherence;
g. concreteness of locale-temporal character;
h. etiquette and conventionality of linguistic means (usually for claims);
i. chiefly co-operative modus of communication.

The written AG is subdivided into a Complaint and a Claim. Pragmatic features of AG can be considered on the basis of J. Searle's system of pragmatic description.
Preparatory conditions. Addressee is in the position enabling him to perform an action that is desirable for Addresser.
Propositional Content conditions. There is an situation unfavorable for Addresser and caused by unsatisfactory behavior of a person (the case of Complaint) or by unsatisfactory quality of something (the case of Claim). Manifestationally, the macro-subject part of the Appellative contains exposition of the preparatory and propositional content conditions; the macro-predicate part contains a request or a demand for specific actions from Addressee which could improve the situation.
Sincerity conditions. The Addresser wishes the Addressee do the requested action.
Essential conditions. First, Addresser's generating a discourse is an attempt to inform Addressee about unsatisfactory state of affairs (this is the secondary function of the Appellative). Second, it is an attempt to impel the Addressee to

perform certain actions to improve the situation (this is the primary function of the Appellative).

Now let's have a look at 7 specific features of the Appellative for the Russian and anglo-saxon cultures.
1. The communicative goal. Claim and Complaint are close in this respect, but the Claim is much weaker in its emotional force (that is, want for understanding and sympathy), especially for Russian culture.
2. The Addresser conception. Addresser's ethos includes sincerity, truthfulness, responsibility and completeness of the exposition of the problem in question.
3. The Addressee conception. The commissioned Addressee has institutional ethos of honesty, objectivity (for the Claim) and empathy (for the Complaint).
4. The situational content. (A) Personal sphere parameter: AG as a written form of discourse presupposes attribution to the personal individual sphere of Addresser and to the social institutional sphere of Addressee. (B) Temporal perspective: it is both past and future: the past deals with the information of the event that caused the Appellative; the future deals with the demand to take measures. (C) Event estimation: it is unsatisfactory character of the past event and satisfactory character of the future event – both for Addresser. (D) Number of episodes: for the Complaint it can be both single (if the problem is solved) and multiple (if the unsatisfactory situation repeats or develops); for the Claim it is usually single.
5. The communicative past. Both the Claim and Complaint are enterprising: it is the Addresser who initiates the verbal event.
6. The communicative future. The monologue character of AG presupposes only anticipated, not real perlocutionary effect that usually involves Addressee's positive reaction.
7. The linguistic manifestation. It is business-style oriented, it is institutional discourse with slight elements of personal discourse (for Complaints); the argumentative component is necessary and it is manifested in syntactically various multi-level argumentation.

Being a written monologue, AG has nevertheless dialogical potential because it is Addressee-oriented. AG discourse is constructed along certain strategies. The strategies in monologue differ from those in dialogue. The dialogue strategies are heuristic and are very sensitive to how the dialogue develops: the strategies can be modified, changed and resigned. The monologue strategies are predominantly lines of constructing coherent discourse (and persuasive for AG); they are not

usually departed from.
We can describe 7 communicative strategies for AG:
1. standardizing;
2. informational completeness;
3. conciseness;
4. logical clarity;
5. politeness;
6. naturalness;
7. expressiveness.

The first 5 strategies are conditioned by general features of official-business style – clarity, accuracy, laconicism, normativity and stereotypicity. They are manifested in Claims. The strategies of naturalness and expressiveness are characteristic for semi-official style and are manifested in Complaints where self-expression and unofficiality is often the case. Complaints are thus in the periphery of the official-business style.

Each strategy has its typical linguistic exposition. According to my student N. Cherkasskaya's observations, for Standardizing it is cliché, terminology, standard constructions. For Informational completeness it is extension constructions, complex sentences, lexical repetitions. For Conciseness it is small and medium format of the text, clichés and abbreviations. For Logical Clarity it is terms and patterns. For Politeness it is etiquette constructions, indirect speech acts, the subjunctive constructions, specific vocabulary. For Naturalness it is unrestricted vocabulary and conversational constructions. For Expressiveness it is emotive nouns, adjectives, particles, intensifiers, negative estimation words, exclamations (Cherkasskaya 2007).
It is important to give some definitions of the units and elements of argumentation on which I base my further considerations, specifically, schematizing arguments.
An argument is a discourse consisting of the grounding and the grounded parts.
Argumentation is both a process of grounding (in dynamics) and its linguistically-manifested result (in statics).
A conclusion (a thesis) is a grounded content (manifested linguistically) within an argument.
A premise is a grounding content (manifested linguistically) within an argument.
An Argumentation Step is a minimal argument, a unit of discourse level.

An Argumentation Move is a main textual unit of argumentation limited by the paragraph boundaries (it can consist of several Steps, sometimes of one step only).
The argumentation factor of AG has not been described before, to the best of my knowledge. Still, in the characterization of complex directives (Karaban 1989) we can find some useful ideas to be taken for the description in question.
V. I. Karaban views a directive as a complex speech act consisting of an argumentative act (Aa) and of a directive act (Da). Propositional content of Aa reflects a problematic/unsatisfactory situation for the addresser. An illustration to this can be the text where a problematic/unsatisfactory situation is a factual premise (taken in round brackets) for an estimation thesis (in square brackets): *I'd only been wearing them for a short while when (one of the heels fell off) and you can imagine [how awkward that was] in the middle of the High Street*; *The contents are (so severely damaged) as to be [unsaleable]; Although we have (followed your operating instructions to the letter) we are [unable to obtain the performances promised].*

V. I. Karaban's view cannot be regarded satisfactory because of his ambiguous treatment of the term *argumentative speech act*. It is both a complex Premise+Conclusion, and only a single Premise. Karaban's *argumentative speech act* is not defined as to its boundaries.
On the one hand, such an act can be manifested within a whole paragraph if we have a fact description. In that case, support is given by the paragraph which is functionally a premise, and the conclusion (p. ex. estimation) can be placed into another paragraph. The *argumentative act* thus crosses the boundaries of an Argumentation Move (a basic discourse unit of argumentation).
On the other hand, the *argumentative act* can be manifested within one and the same paragraph, containing both a premise (fact) and a conclusion (estimation). In this case, *argumentative act* is within its Argumentation Move, and the former can be viewed as a speech act representing the Argumentation Move.
It is also unclear how many *argumentative acts* it takes to get one-time perlocutionary effect of directivity, and if there are several what relations between them are at work.
In our view, grounding in AG can contain more than one tactic. Critical here is that the principal *strategy* is argumentation and it is accomplished by argumentation tactics of premise giving.

These tactics are manifested in the linear text structure relating tectonically (hierarchically) to one another. The tectonics can provide for placing premises on one and the same level (the tactics of single, co-ordinative or multiple argumentation) or on different levels (the tactics of serial argumentation).
From the point of view of *speech-act strategies*, there are two basic of them: argumentative and directive. Using D. Wunderlich's (Wunderlich 1976) approach (on which V. I. Karaban's ideas are clearly based), we can say that AG comprises satisfactive and representation strategies. But since satisfactive in Wunderlich's system is explanation and grounding, the representation strategy is, as a matter of fact, its manifestation. Thus, representation is made by means of these tactics: presentation of the problem, description of the causes of the problem and explication of the harm.
Interestingly enough, Argumentation and Stimulating strategies can be accompanied by the Commissive strategy. In it measures are exposed if the demand is not satisfied. Explicitly commissives are expressed in Russian AG; in anglo-saxon AG it is done implicitly, by means of mentioning the so-called carbon copies (addressed to other people or organizations) in the ending part of the text. The argumentative function of this strategy is that of *ad baculum*.

On the global functional level, the Stimulating strategy performs the Opinion function, the Argumentative strategy – Data and Warrant functions, the Stimulating strategy – the function of Reservation.
The main strategy for AG is stimulating, the other strategy is argumentative (including expositive and some others). We can also model an ideal AG with its strategy components. Since we regard AG as an actional speech genre, the ideal in question is established on the basis of the "problem – solution" feature and can in a somewhat simplified way be represented as follows:

1. Problem.
1.1. The essence of the problem.
1.2. The damages caused by the problem.

2. Solution.
2.1. Possible solutions.
2.2. The best solution.
2.3. Positive results of the solution.

The relation between the macro-components Problem – Solution can be made

more exact as “Since there is a Problem, it must be Solved”. This is a macro-strategy of argumentation for AG.

Let us now take a brief look at the interrelations between the components within the macro-components Problem and Solution.

The relation 1.1. – 1.2 is causal (“if there is a problem, there is/can be harm”). The causal relation differs from argumentation and implication.

Unlike causation, argumentation does not presuppose *obligatory* presence of the cause (p. ex. physical cause) when there is a conclusion. In other words, the problem For example, bad living conditions (problem) do not have to result in family quarrels (harm) – some families having two children having moved from a studio to a two-bedroom flat feel for some time more comfortable in one room. That means that a solution of the problem does not often have to do with harm resolution proper.

Unlike causation, implication is the relation of logical necessity A ⊃ B (on a par with conjunction (A ∧ B), disjunction (A ∨ B), negation (A, Ā), and equivalence (A ~ B)). Some scholars also single out the relation of anti-implication (it combines features of negation and implication and is expressed by construction of concession and adversative (Melnikova 2003, p. 15). The implicative relation between the members of the judgment is true in all contexts. *(see: Figure 1)*

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Figure 1

The relation 1 – 1.1 and 1.2 is informative (by its influence on the addressee) and narrative (by description of the problem).

The relation 2.1 – 2.2 is argumentative: the author gives grounds why his variant is the best one out of all others. The relation 2 – 2.1 is informative (by its influence on the addressee) and narrative (by description of the problem). The relation 2 – 2.2 is argumentative (by its influence on the addressee) and narrative (by description of the problem). The relation 2 – 2.3 is informative (by its influence on the addressee) and narrative (by description of the problem).

The scheme “Problem – Solution is not always accomplished in its full form: the component 2.1 is not often used with the explication of 2.2 instead. The component 2.3 is used more often than 2.1 but more seldom than 2.2.

The Argumentation strategy is manifested through the tactics of premise giving.

We observed about 40 tectonic-functional types of argumentation for AG; those tactics are manifested with two opposite tendencies – (A) to freedom of tectonics and (B) to restriction of tectonics.

Tendency (A) is conditioned by culture and by context. By culture, AG in American culture are manifested by structures with lesser branching and depth than in Russian culture. By context, the structures are very different and we failed to detect any regularity. Most common for Complaints in Russian and English is a 4-level tactic of giving premises. The same is true for British and American Claims. Russian Claims are most often exposed by a 6-level tactic of premise-giving. For Russian Complaints we observed many 2-level cases of premise-giving which is absolute minimum for Complaints; on the other hand, Russian Claims give an absolute maximum of levels in premise-giving – it is as many as 9 levels which is completely un-characteristic for British and American AG.

Tendency (B) – restriction of tectonics is due to 2 textual factors: (a) length of the text; (b) conventionality of the super-structure. A computer-printed Complaint does not exceed 1 page (A-4 format); a hand-written Complaint in a complaint-book is usually up to half a page (A-5 format). Speaking of a Claim, it is usually written according to a standard pattern which can determined by normative recommendations (in Russian culture) or to usage (see the details for my student's and mine collaborative work in: Cherkasskaya 2009).
To see structural and semantic characteristics of AG let us consider two examples – one from the Russian culture, the other – from anglo-saxon one. These two examples do not, of course, exhaust potentialities of AG: there are typical 4-level and 6-level structures as well as 2-level arguments in short written complaints and 9-level structures in one Russian complaint (see: Cherkasskaya 2009, p. 19-20).

Complaint Example
(translated from Russian; syntax as in the original).
On 9/5/2008 I bought a North refrigerator at your store; in 6 month (1-1), within a warranty period, it got broken. I went to a warranty shop to repair it. (1-2) Because there were no necessary repair details (1-3) the master could not repair it, and (1-4) there won't be necessary details available in the shop within this month.
So,(2-1) this problem cannot be solved without excessive time waste and (2-2)is therefore essential; (2-3) I have the right to change the refrigerator to a similar

product of a different trade-mark.

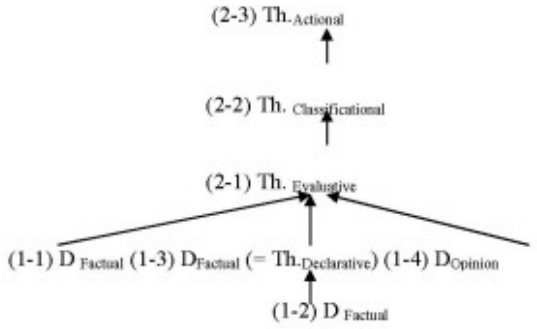

Figure 2

Claim example.
Dear Sirs,
After carefully examining the sawn goods supplied under our order of 16 October, (1-1) we must express surprise and (1-2) disappointment at their quality. (1-3) They certainly do not match the samples on the basis of which the contract was signed. (1-4) Some of the boards are of the wrong sizes and we can not help feeling (1-5) there must have been some mistake in making up the order.
(2-1)The sawn goods are quite unsuited to the needs of our customers and (2-2) we have no choice but to ask you to take them back and (2-3) replace them by sawn goods of the quality ordered. If this is not possible, then I am afraid (2-4) we shall have to ask you to cancel our order.
We have no wish to embarrass you and if (3-1) you can replace the goods (3-2) we are prepared to allow the stated time for delivery to run from the date you confirm that you can supply the goods we need.
Yours faithfully,
R. Fairfax

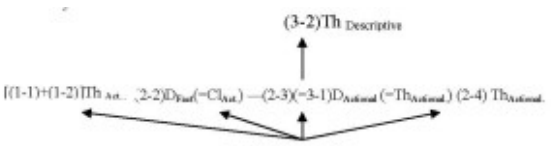

Figure 3

Argumentation in the Complaint is manifested by a five-level structure with co-ordination on the fourth level and single subordination on the fifth level. The

actional Conclusion (= argument Thesis) of the first level is sentence (2-3), the classification Thesis of the second level is sentence (2-2), the evaluative Thesis of the third level is sentence (2-1). Premises (1-1) and (1-2) are factual Data, premise (1-4) is opinion Data; (1-3) is a declarative Thesis transformed into factual Data on the closest higher level.

Argumentation in the Claim is a six-level structure with subordination between levels (6) and (5), (5) and (4), (4) and (3), (2) and (1); there is a divergence structure between levels (3) and (2) and a coordinative structure on the second level.
The functional semantics of the premises is this. Premises (1-5), (1-4), (1-3) and (2-1) are factual Data. Sentences (1-1)+(1-2) and sentence (2-4) are of actional Thesis nature. The same holds for sentences (2-2) and (2-3) which transform into coordinated factual Date for their higher level. Sentence (3-2) is a declarative Thesis.

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