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**INVOLVEMENT IN THE ACTIVITIES OF ILLEGAL ORGANIZATIONS  
AS A LINGUISTIC PROBLEM**

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**Abstract**

The study of human involvement in the activities of illegal organizations as a social phenomenon is conducted within the framework of an integrated multilateral expertise, since such involvement is an interdisciplinary category. Experience reveals that the use of linguistic analysis to prove verbal violations in communication within illegal groups implies an expanded understanding of the category of involvement. In this regard, the methods of critical discourse analysis are especially relevant, since they are based on the language motivation system and meet the requirements of social and cognitive suprasystems. The ultimate goal of the study is to present expert evidence of organized criminal activity in court, according to which the authors formulate the main principles of characterizing involvement based on an analytical review of the phenomenon of participation in interactive sociolinguistics (John J. Gumperz), discourse analysis (Wallace Chafe, Deborah Tannen) and communicative ethnography (Niko Besnier)

**Keywords**

Involvement – Critical discourse analysis – Forensic linguistic examination

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## Introduction

As a modern social phenomenon, involvement in the activities of illegal organizations is conditioned by the aspiration of the participants of criminal communities (as a rule, terrorist and extremist) to expand (quantitatively and qualitatively) the sphere of existence of certain group norms, to involve society representatives from outside, thus creating new axiological dominants that are necessary for a given criminal group. In this regard, the phenomenon of involvement should be viewed as an interdisciplinary category requiring a most comprehensive examination.

The use of linguistic analysis to prove verbal violations in communication within illegal groups defines, (as experience shows) an expanded understanding of the category of involvement. However, as an analytical category used in many areas of linguistics – interactive sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, ethnography of communication – involvement is not regarded in conjunction with the goals of the law, and therefore requires an actual and in-depth description, relevant to forensic linguistic practice.

## Interactive sociolinguistics

The need to create a new category within the framework of the sociolinguistic theory was due to studying the facts of ‘live’ interpersonal communication, as well as the methods and strategies of everyday speech behavior. In relevant works, ‘participation’ meant the willingness and ability of communicants to initiate and maintain interaction. More correctly, ‘participation’ in this sense is considered as a prerequisite for the success of any act of communication and is made possible by the availability of linguistic and sociocultural knowledge shared among all interlocutors<sup>1</sup>.

One of the first scientists to consider ‘participation’ as an analytical category was John Gumperz. Investigating discursive strategies and communicative ‘failures’ in interethnic and intercultural interaction, J. Gumperz noted that all the communication participants – the speaker(s) and the listener(s) – should react actively to the way discussion develops; this should be considered as a prerequisite for the effectiveness of any discursive act and, at the same time, as a basis to form a common presupposition field. Both participants must also report the end of the communication either directly with linguistic signs or indirectly (with gestures or similar non-verbal signals)<sup>2</sup>. In the opinion of the scientist, it is conversational engagement (абстрактное существительное, употреблённое в общем смысле, имеет нулевой артикль, несмотря на определение, да и определение тут классифицирующее, а не унифицирующее опять же) which is the basis of all linguistic understanding. Thus, the general theory of discursive strategies must begin with the identification of unified linguistic and sociocultural knowledge that must be shared in order to maintain the involvement in the discussion and then move on to form a competence that allows appropriately interpreting the situational and subcultural specifics of speech behavior<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> N. Besnier, “Involvement, Encyclopedia of language and linguistics”, R. E. Asher et al., (eds). Vol: 4 (1994): 1770-1772.

<sup>2</sup> J. Gumperz, Discourse Strategies, Studies in Interactional Sociolinguistics, Vol: 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

<sup>3</sup> J. Gumperz, “Contextualization and Understanding”. A. Duranti and C. Goodwin (eds). Rethinking Context: Language as an Interactive Phenomenon, (1992): 229-252.



During the interaction, communicants use a variety of verbal and non-verbal signals to link what was said at a specific moment in time at a particular place with the experience acquired by them earlier; this is done in order to create 'footholds' to rely on in future for maintaining dialogue and ensuring an adequate response during the discussion<sup>4</sup>. J. Gumperz terms the use of such signals 'contextualization'; it is carried out with the help of tools that allow transferring communication into an interactive mode: prosodic (intonation, emphasis, pitch), paralinguistic (speech tempo, pausing, hesitation, synchronization of conversations), stylistic, phonetic, phonological, morphosyntactic, lexical variables and variants of speech clichés. These signals are introduced and perceived at the subconscious level (automatically), and their use provides an adequate understanding between communication partners<sup>5</sup>

It should be noted/pointed out (синонимы) that John Gumperz' works have much in common with the sociological studies conducted earlier by Erwin Goffman. His interpretation of 'participation' is based on the social context of this phenomenon: "To be engaged in any activity means to support a certain cognitive and emotional perception of this activity, mobilizing psychobiological resources; in other words, it means being involved in it"<sup>6</sup>. In his work on describing and analyzing human behavior in public places, E. Goffman regards various social events and their influence on the state of 'participation' while drawing attention to the fact that in analyzing any event, it is necessary to take social norms that determine the specific features and degree of 'participation' into account<sup>7</sup>.

In general, the category of 'participation' refers to the ability of a person to pay or, vice versa, not to pay attention to any activity, whether it is performing a task, working together or communicating. 'Participation' implies some permissible proximity between the subject and the object of involvement, as well as a certain perception on the part of the person involved in this activity: involvement in activities is necessary to express the task or goal of the subject (or the performer)<sup>8</sup>. Accordingly, the phenomenon of involvement should be described within social events, within various phases of these events, in order to assess engagement as the situation changes.

### **Discourse analysis: Wallace Chafe**

Wallace Chafe uses the category of participation in the context of studying the differences between oral and written variants of discursive practice. The peculiarity of the oral form of the discourse is that communicants should pay attention to both the communicative action and the partners, to their needs and intentions, and while writing the author seeks to create an integral text that will be self-sufficient and will pass the test of time<sup>9</sup>

W. Chafe nominates a number of parameters that distinguish written discourse from oral: fragmentation, integration, detachment and participation, that is, features that reflect different types of cognitive activity associated with the creation of a text. Since writing is the activity carried out by one subject, and speech is usually actualized in social interaction,

<sup>4</sup> J. Gumperz, "Contextualization and Understanding..."

<sup>5</sup> J. Gumperz, "Contextualization and Understanding..."

<sup>6</sup> E. Goffman, Behavior in public places, Notes on the social organization of gatherings (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963)

<sup>7</sup> E. Goffman, Behavior in public places, Notes on the social...

<sup>8</sup> E. Goffman, Behavior in public places, Notes on the social...

<sup>9</sup> W. L. Chafe, "Integration and involvement in speaking, writing, and oral literature". Tannen D (ed). Spoken and Written Language: Exploring Orality and Literacy, (1982): 35-53.

written discursive practice is characterized by apparent detachment, becoming an opposition to the oral form of discourse<sup>10</sup>. In 'live' communication, interaction between interlocutors takes place in real time, which allows the speaker to observe the effect produced by their speech on the listeners, and at the same time enables the listener to contribute to the communication process by sending signals demonstrating agreement, disagreement, interest, etc. In case of a written text, there is a spatial and temporal distance between communication participants which means that the writer is interested not so much in the empirical influence on the reader but in the creation of a text that will be consistent and logical for different people, at different times and in different places<sup>11</sup>.

Accordingly, involvement is an important communicative parameter determining the nature of participation of a person from another culture in a conversation, which is embodied either in the participation indicators or in the code switching system. Live speech – spoken language – contains indications of the 'inclusion' of the speaker in both the audience and themselves (the objectification of internal meanings), and their participation in the specific reality of what is being said<sup>12</sup>.

Thus, W. Chafe illustrates the phenomenon of involvement by language constructions in a situation where the interlocutor reacts to someone else's cue:

(Would you do that?)  
 ... Yeah .. I think I would.  
 (Beatrice said that?)  
 ... That's what I thought she said.

The second indicator is the frequency of the expression 'you know' with which the speaker tries to make sure that the listener closely follows the speech, without directly asking for confirmation:

So you can't ... you know .. fudge in some Styrofoam .. or something like that.  
 Only this all takes .. you know .. ten minutes to compose<sup>13</sup>.

Another type of involvement is characterized by an expression of open concern with something / someone, which is marked by deliberate use of the first person pronouns (I, me, my, mine, we, us, our, ours). W. Chafe gives two examples from a correspondence:

I could be telling you the same things in person.  
 As you can see, my difficulty with writing extends not only to its phrasing but also to its timing<sup>14</sup>.

Another obvious indicator of involvement is the use of adverbs and expressions of time and space:

<sup>10</sup> W. L. Chafe, "Linguistic Differences Produced by Differences between Speaking and Writing". David R. Olson, Andrea Hildyard, and Nancy Torrance (eds). *Literacy, Language, and Learning* (1985): 105-123.

<sup>11</sup> W. L. Chafe, "Integration and involvement in speaking, writing..."

<sup>12</sup> W. L. Chafe and J. Danielewicz, "Properties of spoken and written language". Rosalind Horowitz and S. J. Samuels (eds). *Comprehending Oral and Written Language* (1987): 83-113.

<sup>13</sup> W. L. Chafe and J. Danielewicz, "Properties of spoken and written..."

<sup>14</sup> W. L. Chafe and J. Danielewicz, "Properties of spoken and written..."

I applied for this postdoc last March.  
It looks like life is going to really be nice in Akron<sup>15</sup>.

### Discourse analysis: Deborah Tannen

W. Chafe's ideas were developed by Deborah Tannen; their joint research allowed giving a scientific explanation to the phenomenon of involvement<sup>16</sup>. Being an adherent and follower of W. Chafe, D. Tannen considers the involvement in the context of the correlation between oral and written discourse. In favor of such decision, D. Tannen offers two hypotheses: the contextualization hypothesis and the cohesion hypothesis.

According to the contextualization hypothesis, oral discourse turns out to be more 'attached' to the circumstances of communication than written one, since oral discourse is always contextually conditioned, whereas written discourse is decontextualized. Thus, the speaker can refer to the context of specific momentary circumstances known to both interlocutors who are at one time in one place. D. Tannen writes that one can say: 'Look at this!', meaning that listeners see the object to which the speaker refers. Second, the speaker is not allowed to fully control the degree of correctness/detail of the presentation, since they can stop the dialogue seeing that the interlocutors are embarrassed or disagree. The latter, in turn, can immediately ask for clarifications/explanations. Third, the interlocutors often exchange their accumulated social experience and, consequently, form common ideas about the world. Written discourse, on the contrary, is more independent of the context. The author and the reader are usually separated from each other by time and space, and that is why the integrity of the propositions is lost. The reader cannot ask for clarification if they do not fully understand the author, so the author must in advance take into account all the factors that could 'embarrass' the reader, and include in the text not only the background information but as many logical arguments as possible. Finally, since the writer and the reader are unlikely to be united by a social universe, and as a result, their views may not coincide; the author is forced to make substantially less inferences, leaving the right for interpretation to the reader<sup>17</sup>.

According to the cohesion hypothesis, the difference between oral and written language is in the mechanisms for organizing the coherence of the text. In speech discourse, connectivity is provided by paralinguistic and prosodic keys, while in written discourse the connection a priori must be verbal. However, in any case, all the included verbal and non-verbal elements demonstrate the speaker's relation to their message and establish a relationship (that is, reflect the relationship) between thoughts, updating one component and masking the others<sup>18</sup>.

Conclusions about the differences between oral and written discourse, made by D. Tannen, are very close to the views of W. Chafe. According to her, discourse in which meaning and relations are expressed paralinguistically, non-verbally or indirectly (that is, using strategies that are characteristic of 'face to face' communication) can only be oral. These strategies are built on interpersonal participation, since the introduction of implicit

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<sup>15</sup> W. L. Chafe, and J. Danielewicz, "Properties of spoken and written..."

<sup>16</sup> W.L. Chafe, and D. Tannen, "The Relation between Written..."

<sup>17</sup> D. Tannen, "Relative focus on involvement in oral and written discourse". David R. Olson, Nancy Torrance and Angela Hildyard (eds). Literacy, language, and learning: The nature and consequences of reading and writing, (1985): 124-147.

<sup>18</sup> D. Tannen, "Relative focus on involvement in oral and written discourse..."

information and the establishment of relations between sentences, as well as the evaluation of voice and other paralinguistic constituents, requires that the listener, relying on background knowledge and sharing with the speaker the former communicative experience, participates in the creation of a new semantic field that creates in the listener a sense of belonging. Discourse which relies on the lexicalization of meanings and relations between sentences either has a written form of interaction or uses strategies characteristic of it. In other words, lexicalization shifts the focus to the message and distracts attention from the general social experience of the writer and the reader, as a result of which the activity of the addressee is significantly reduced<sup>19</sup>.

The specifics of oral and written communication predetermines the development of the concept of 'involvement strategy' as an analytical category. Involvement strategies demonstrate how the interlocutors can integrate into the interpersonal communication context or achieve "an inner, even emotional, connection with a person, like the one that connects us to places, things, actions, ideas, memories and words"<sup>20</sup>. Thus, the category of 'involvement strategy' includes the 'dismantling' (disobjectification) of how the speaker and listener determine the factor of a 'stranger' in the process of speaking and understanding speech. In this regard, the researcher draws attention to the structural diversity of participation modes, dividing them into strategies of sound and semantic levels, while D. Tannen includes in the sound level the use of strategies that primarily (but not exclusively) rely on sounds and have the following constituents: rhythm, sound patterns based on the repetition and variation of phonemes, morphemes, words, word combinations and longer units of discourse, as well as stylistic figures of speech (many of which are different types of repetitions)<sup>21</sup>.

### **Ethnography of speech**

The works on ethnography, on the one hand, helped the researchers of the phenomenon of involvement realize the importance of the sociocultural context in the implementation and interpretation of discourse strategies, and, on the other hand, called into question the universality of this category as an analytical construction. In Besnier's works [Besnier 1994b], involvement is seen as a moment of full emotional feedback to someone/something, objectified by national forms of communication and related to the extra-linguistic context. Thus, the importance of the social context for understanding the phenomenon of involvement is demonstrated by the example of bazaars – the form of holding meetings in Kenya. The participants (the speaker and the audience) use the same manner of communication to achieve various communicative goals. However, this type of communication demonstrates a high degree of involvement of interlocutors, which is characterized by the consistency of questions and answers, appeals and applause, sounding in unison, and by a lot of repetitions and parallel constructions. In this harmonious system, one side creates political reality, that is, exerts pressure on subordinate groups, forcing them to shout out words of approval for obviously unpopular decisions. As an example, the author gives quotes from a meeting in support of the ban on private production of raw materials for alcoholic beverages (in Kenya small beer merchants and farmers who grow sugar cane form alliances). In turn, the other party, which claims to support government initiatives, is implementing a much more difficult task than it may seem. For the audience, it is important not only to hide the true (more often negative) reaction to the government's

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<sup>19</sup> D. Tannen, "Relative focus on involvement in oral and written discourse..."

<sup>20</sup> D. Tannen, Talking voices: Repetition, dialogue, and imagery in conversational discourse...

<sup>21</sup> D. Tannen, Talking voices: Repetition, dialogue, and imagery in conversational discourse...

actions but also to show own loyalty, to show cooperation in the most favorable light and to assure everyone that the state stands for establishing control by the ruling groups over the chaos in the social sphere and, thereby, plays a stabilizing role.

At the same time, Besnier admits that the question of involvement status remains open: is involvement a psychological category implicitly claiming universality, or is it a category important for describing different communicative cultures? Although the 'psychological cooperation' between speakers is a necessary condition for effective communication, its nature and volume in various groups and subgroups vary considerably.

### **Involvement as the object of forensic linguistics**

Thus, interactive sociolinguistics correlates the concept of involvement with the willingness and the ability of speakers to actively participate in interaction based on a common language and socio-cultural knowledge; here interactivity and the immutability of the condition of staying in interaction, other than simple joint presence (Gumperz), is actualized. In discourse analysis, involvement is one of the functional parameters of the language, a semiotically marked type of participation in a communicative event that is characterized by the immediate inclusion of the interlocutors in the chronotopical framework (Chafe); a certain 'sincere' contact, reached by people in the process of communication and connecting them with events and circumstances (Tannen). In speech ethnography, involvement is seen primarily through the prism of nationally and socially marked forms of communication (Besnier). In sum, it can be argued that linguists are interested in the observed coordination of utterances which is described through a different-level repertoire of intra- and extralinguistic means, taking into account the one-moment character and contextualization as signs of proximity of communicants, of their common interest in a specific situation and in a broader social context. The tradition of using the described concept in other humanitarian scientific fields – jurisprudence and social psychology – indicates that involvement can be viewed as a gradual, long-term, stable process that regulates and supports the willingness of individuals to work in the interests of a group which includes them, despite the possible 'costs'. Thus, in jurisprudence, involvement is a purposeful activity that determines the value definition of an object and the willingness to participate in a socially dangerous act, that is, the formation of behavioral responses in an individual that will lead said individual to committing special criminal acts and to understanding the very idea of such actions<sup>22</sup>. In social psychology, involvement is one of the sides of psychological impact associated with the conditions/ways/methods of joining and participating in the group<sup>23</sup>. It is obvious that the practice of judicial and linguistic expertise of the activity of the relevant non-legitimate organization will be coordinated with the socio-psychological form of the phenomenon under study and with the idea of 'interaction abuse' in the illegal group<sup>24</sup>. In these circumstances, the critical methodology not only

<sup>22</sup> M. A. Selivanova, "On concept of involvement of minors in committing crimes". News of Irkutsk State Economic Academy, num 2 (70) (2010): 146-149.

<sup>23</sup> V. Y Aslanyan, "Empirical allocation of criteria for evaluating disruptiveness of psychological influence in the course of professional activity of religious cults attendants". The Siberian psychological magazine, num 28 (2008): 69-74; Y. P. Zinchenko; G. U. Soldatov and L. A. Shaygerov, "An act of terrorism as an extreme situation in the society of risks". National Psychological Magazine, num 2 (6) (2011): 98-111 y I. A. Savichenko, "The psychological state of the personality promoting its involvement in totalitarian neocults". Questions of criminalistics and judicial examinations. Siberian Legal Messenger, num 3 (30) (2006): 82-86.

<sup>24</sup> P. A. Katyshev and B. E. Kildibekova, "Involvement from positions of rhetorical criticism". The Bulletin of Kemerovo State University, num 4-4 (64) (2015): 89-96.

reveals its special significance, as evidenced by the exploratory descriptions of the results of various linguistic examinations in cases with other content components (false evidence, slander, insult, extremist crimes, etc.) presented in the relevant papers<sup>25</sup>, but increasingly acquires the status of an institutional field of knowledge, regulated by standards, formalized procedures and requirements<sup>26</sup>.

In general, expert studies use critical methodology in the interdisciplinary sphere and are based on the idea that the motivational system of language and speech is the response to social (primarily the structure of the organization and its legal status) and cognitive (associated with the process of influencing consciousness and behavior) suprasystems.

## Conclusion

The authors of the present study believe that conceptual description of the phenomenon of involvement, taking into account the critical approach, needs revision, since it does not correspond to the ideas developed around this phenomenon within the framework of individual scientific paradigms. Involvement should be seen as an asymmetric process that takes place in different forms of discursive practice both in relation to the members of the group themselves and towards non-members (attracting primary audiences). In this process, the initiator forms and activates the willingness of communication participants to commit concerted actions, updates the conditions for participation and the empathy/sympathy factor, ensures mandatory observance of accepted social obligations and cooperating conventions, ensures separation of responsibilities within the group, ensures interest in achieving joint goals, consciously labeling belonging to one and the same ethnic, cultural, social or confessional community, etc. At the same time, individuals can be 'brought' to the conditions for the conscious commission of such actions which will be treated as illegitimate/illegal and have negative consequences for their perpetrators.

The intention of the initiative party to attract followers for the implementation of illegitimate acts, its dominance becomes the driving force of the phenomenon of involvement. Formation of the future member of the illegal group is largely carried out discursively: in personal meetings, conversations, at conferences, through periodicals, special publications, through training, acquaintance with didactic materials, distribution of leaflets and texts of religious and ideological content, posting information in social networks/Internet resources, etc.

Such variety of discursive acts of involvement, perceived through the prism of critical

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<sup>25</sup> L. A. Araeva and M. A. Osadchiy, "The language identity of the extremist (about examination specifics on criminal manifestations of extremism)". *The Language Personality: modeling, typology, portraiture*, (2014): 533-544; M. A. Osadchy, *Public speech communication in managing legal risks: PhD thesis*. (Kemerovo, 2012); A. N. Baranov, *Linguistic examination of the text* (Moscow: Flinta: Nauka, 2007); K. I. Brinev, *Theoretical linguistics and judicial linguistic examination* (Moscow: Flinta, 2012); E. E. Hazimullina, *Linguistic examination of texts with implicit contents*. Retrieved 29.02.2016 from: [http://siberia-expert.com/statji/khazimullina\\_2012.pdf](http://siberia-expert.com/statji/khazimullina_2012.pdf). y N. D. Golev, "Legal aspect of language in linguistic lighting". *Judicial linguistics*, num 1 (1999): 11-58.

<sup>26</sup> M. V. Ablin, *Theory-methodological justification of linguistic examination on cases of extremism: PhD thesis* (Ufa, 2015); K. I. Brinev, *Theoretical linguistics and judicial linguistic examination* (Moscow: Flinta, 2012); N. D. Golev, "Judicial linguistics, Effective speech communication (Basic competences): Dictionary reference". A. P. Skovorodnikov (ed). *Electronic edition. Siberian Federal University*, (2014): 772-773 y M. A. Osadchy, *Public speech communication in managing legal risks: PhD thesis*. (Kemerovo, 2012).



methodology, allows formulating a number of provisions on which it is necessary (as the authors of the present study believe) to rely during a linguistic expertise.

1. Involvement as an organized discursive process proceeds gradually, that is, in several stages, the realization of which involves the use of various techniques of mutual influence – low, medium or high stimulation potential – on the audience (depending on intellect, automatism, readiness, complexity of performance, etc.).

2. Involvement is closely connected with the context, since of communication and many other circumstances.

3. Involvement is not a one-time event, so the ‘influx’ of new participants into the organization ensures the stability and viability of the association.

4. The phenomenon of involvement does not follow from any one speech act; it includes a multitude of communicative events, temporarily replacing each other.

5. Involvement, as a rule, is an interdiscursive phenomenon, that is, it is actualized (без разницы) through a combination of different types of discourse – marketing, administrative, didactic, religious, political, etc.

6. Involvement has a metadiscursive character. It is objectified by the typical forms of oral and/or written interaction related to different types of institutional discourse, yet it has many common cognitive, communicative, pragmatic, structural and linguistic features that form the functional and semantic field of ‘ownership. This field incorporates the linguistic, speech and other semiotic constituents into verbal interaction, defining specific speech behaviour patterns usually called ‘discourse strategy of involvement’ in works on linguopragmatics.

7. Involvement in the activity of an illegal organization is a certain kind of social structure that continuously accumulates a set of value-significant ideas and forms the system of knowledge necessary to reproduce the impact. In this formation, one can distinguish several levels of a communicatively oriented system into which the typical co-participation ideas and knowledge about them are conditionally distributed:

(a) knowledge of the ethnosocial and communication context peculiarities establishing common ideological coordinates of the interaction of the group with the internal and external environment;

(b) knowledge of the implementation stages of the ‘involving influence’ determining the type of initiator and addressee, the form of their interaction (depending on the degree of complexity of community formation), types of joint activities, methods of creating an image of the organization, tactics to attract a wider audience;

(c) knowledge of the discursive system as a specific configuration of the types and forms of discourses, as well as strategies for their implementation.

8. An expert study of the phenomenon of involvement in the activities of illegal organizations relies on a methodology that has various analytical procedures depending on the stages, forms and formats of acts of involvement, interests and qualifications of the researcher, their understanding of the boundaries of linguistic competence and other parameters of the research context.

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