Approaches to Conflict

Theoretical, Interpersonal, and Discursive Dynamics

Edited by
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LEXINGTON BOOKS
Lanham • Boulder • New York • London
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This chapter seeks to answer the following research question: How does the structure of argumentation, which is examined through the prism of discourse analysis, unfold in an intercultural conflict situation? Given the fact that current diplomatic communication is only available to us through mass media, we chose to analyze texts accessible in print, that is, newspapers and magazines. The research focuses on media coverage of the diplomatic conflict caused by the closure of the British Council’s offices in Russia in 2008. The British Council is a charitable organization, nominally independent of the government, that promotes business and academic links with the United Kingdom, as well as the English language and cultural exchanges. Until 2008, the council had offices across Russia. Although nine of them by then had already been marked for closure under plans to restructure the body internationally, the British Council initially planned to keep its offices open in St. Petersburg and Yekaterinburg, where Britain has consulates, as well as its branch in the U.K. embassy in Moscow. However, on December 12, a spokesman for the Russian Foreign Ministry ordered the British Council to shut its offices outside Moscow by the end of January 2008 on the grounds of violating diplomatic agreements and Russian tax laws. The British side rejected the Russian allegations, describing them as illegal, and regarded the closure as a political move following the expulsion of four Russian diplomats by Britain in connection with the London murder of the Russian dissident Alexander Litvinenko.

The rationale behind selecting that particular diplomatic conflict for illustrative purposes is twofold. First, the event that triggered the conflict goes...
back a few years and is therefore viewed retrospectively, which provides a much clearer picture of the conflict dynamics. Second, the relatively small political scale of the conflict makes it possible to focus on the intercultural aspects of argumentation, as well as the complexity of the conflict and its multifaceted nature.

In examining the conflict, we first analyze the intersecting issues of diplomatic communication and conflict theories relevant to the interculturality of the former. Next, using a discourse approach, which allows us to consider both individual and social patterns in linguistic structure, we concentrate on the relationships between intercultural conflict dynamics and argumentation analysis. Furthermore, we carry out a bi-level—macro and micro—discourse analysis of media texts concerned with the diplomatic conflict in question. This analysis yields evidence of the differences in the perception of the conflict by both sides, as well as wide divergences in attitudes toward the conflict and the use of particular styles and reasoning.

**DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT**

There is a growing body of literature on diplomatic discourse in relation to conflict, language, and culture. First, there are studies that indicate diplomatic communication involves opposites, a discussion between at least two parties, a negotiation, a conflict, and conflict resolution. Donahue and Prosser (1997) stated that the basic principle of communication is that “we communicate whether we want to or not.” In the context of diplomatic communication, this transforms into newer or deeper meanings due to the speaker’s relative diplomatic position and existing social hierarchy between diplomats (Donahue and Prosser 1997, 22). A diplomat’s words can be considered in the light of other alternative views. At the same time, appreciation of an opposing view does not necessarily imply its acceptance. The analysis of diplomatic discourse organization would be instructive to consider critical communication concerning language and cultural awareness (Donahue and Prosser 1997). Tiberghien’s interpretation of conflict also fits into this line of discussion. Diplomatic conflict will mean opposed actions, which rely primarily upon verbal persuasion, such as contract negotiations and grievance handling (Tiberghien 2010). Snyder and Diesing (2015) took the concept of international conflict to a higher level of crisis communication, defining it as “a sequence of interactions between the government of two or more sovereign states in severe conflict” (6). Interaction becomes the dominant theoretical theme of bargaining, and sequence denotes a span of time and relatedness between the specific instances of interaction. Thus the authors’ understanding of interna-
tional crisis corresponds to conflict dynamics. However, there are other forms of disputation (conflict behavior) between great powers that cannot be called crises because they are below the “crisis threshold.” Such low-intensity forms of conflict behavior may be referred to as “disputes,” “disagreements,” “press wars,” or simply “bad relations” (Thussu and Freedman 2003, 7).

Another example of investigating intercultural conflict dynamics is the research conducted by Blommaert (1991), who analyzed political speeches leading to a serious diplomatic conflict, in time series (15). He found the conflict-generating character of a (political leader’s) speech could be caused by conflicting culture-specific norms of communication because the latter is perceived as contrary to common diplomatic rules by members of other cultures. Research results show implicit superiority of Western (Anglo-American) culture in diplomatic conflict resolution. For instance, the rationality of Soviet culture ranks lower, far below what we find in non-Western cultures. In addition, counter-arguments to a political speaker in international politics take into account individual characteristics, emotional factors, and cultural differences. This implies that the transfer of cultural knowledge between cultures is one sided.

There are diverse theories of conflict. In a broad communicative sense, conflict is viewed as contesting behavior in which participants are trying “to win,” sometimes controlling or influencing the behavior of others (Schelling 1980, 3–4). Pure conflict, in which the interests of two antagonists are completely opposed, is a special case. For this reason, “winning” in a conflict does not have a strictly competitive meaning. “It means gaining relative to one’s own value system; and this may be done by bargaining, by mutual accommodation, or by the avoidance of mutually damaging behavior” (Schelling 1980, 5–6). In any conflict situation, conflicting parties have to consider protecting their respective interests and conflict goals and/or honoring or attacking another person’s conflict goals. As observed by Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998), the party’s appeal to the communicative (conversational) goal is manifested in face-threatening and face-saving tactics and conflict can be regarded as an ideal forum for using them.

Assuming that conflict is a communication process and culture is a system of symbols and meanings, conflict can be viewed as intrinsic to the normative system of culture (Ting-Toomey 1999). Conflict can only be functional when it maintains the fundamental cultural norms and values, provides an appropriate degree of stability in the system, and takes place in a normative heterogeneous culture in which individual opinions and viewpoints are respected. Otherwise, conflict is dysfunctional. According to Ting-Toomey (1999), cultures differ in the following aspects: individual/group orientation, covert/overt communication patterns, and maintaining a heterogeneous/
homogeneous normative structure. The findings of later studies, which take this point further, imply that conflicts vary in how they are perceived (instrumental or expressive), in their causes (individual/collective normative expectations violation), in direct/indirect attitudes toward them, and finally in the use of factual-inductive style or axiomatic-deductive style vs. affective-intuitive style in conflict (Burgoon et al. 1982; Chen 1992; Cohen 1987; Slavik 2004; Woo and Lee 2007). Taken as a whole, diplomatic communication presupposes conflict. Given the multifaceted nature of conflict, we consider it necessary to focus the study on conflict dynamics in order to explore the concept of conflict in its various aspects, as applied to diplomatic discourse.

**INTERCULTURAL CONFLICT AND ARGUMENTATION ANALYSIS**

As indicated earlier, research on intercultural conflict dynamics often finds such argumentation-related issues as reasoning style, normative expectations, and rationality/irrationality important (Candlin and Gotti 2007). The area closest to the study of argumentation in the context of intercultural communication is the discourse approach (Dahl 2004). For instance, Gasper (2000) focused on analyzing policy wording as argumentation, on the premise that policy talk and writing are supposed to make logically reasoned claims. Gasper stated that policy analysis involves the assessment and preparation of arguments in which ideas about values/objectives/priorities are combined with claims about facts and cause-effect sequences for the purpose of estimating past or possible future actions. Each approach to policy analysis can be seen as a particular argumentation style that selects and treats ideas and data in a culturally specific way.

There is a logical link between the approach of analyzing intercultural conflict as argumentation and research on diplomatic communication dynamics and development (Gilboa 2002). As Mowlana (1997) pointed out, researchers have recognized that with the advent of modern communication technology and the emergence of nongovernmental actors, a new style of diplomacy arose, one more oriented toward the masses and the public. This new flow of information has developed into “political persuasive communication” and, more recently, has been recognized as “public diplomacy” (Mowlana 1997, 11). Thus researchers have been stimulated to use data about communication, mass media, public opinion, and attitude change, which has resulted in making an important contribution in the area of communication and foreign policy and a better understanding of how international images are formed and held. Based on the concepts of cultural worldview and linguistic determinism applied to United Nation speeches involving a conflict of views about forms of government and
ways of living, Donahue and Prosser (1997) discussed common argumentation patterns, such as hypothetical vs. real, general vs. particular, and rank-related ideas in order of importance from high to low or the reverse (24–43).

Gottsegen (1998) presented argumentation analysis as a method of revealing the interests and reasoning of stakeholders in a debate. The analysis of an argument indicates the function of each assertion relative to others, which makes it possible to see how different stakeholder interests or perceptions, as reflected by these assertions, relate to others in the logic of the argument, and which of them are crucial for the argument as a whole. This view of an argument can expose key areas of common ground and areas of disagreement. This can subsequently be used as the basis for negotiation or dispute resolution. Adjacent to the aforementioned is the approach taken by Rancer and Avtgis (2006), who aligned assertiveness with argumentativeness as constructive communication traits. To be specific, all arguments are assertive, but not all assertiveness involves arguments. This kind of analysis allows determining whether the degree of argumentativeness is low or high, conflicted-feeling moderate, apathetic, or neutral. The authors provide a mechanism for researching hostility and verbal aggressiveness in examples of destructive communication behavior during conflict, which are often highlighted by stories in magazines and newspapers. However, only a few studies on diplomatic conflict use discourse analysis to investigate such factors as news value and the growing prominence of economic issues in media agenda or to focus on the sensitivity of diplomatic and political conflict as the determinants for reporting (Zhang and Brown 2009).

Dolinina and Cecchetto (1998) introduced a new dimension—facework (the establishment of culture-sensitive politeness strategies)—to the theory and practice of argumentation and examined it from a number of perspectives: its specific features in comparison with ordinary argumentative discourse, the interpretation of the concept of incommensurability, and the conduct of international negotiations. As observed by the authors, politeness systems functioning in different cultures are not unpredictable, but, on a cognitive and linguistic level, represent a highly generalized universal system, which can be adopted by interlocutors and used in practical discourse. The structure of politeness formulas is determined by two sets of factors: linguistic components (that is, specific language forms) and discourse patterns. The proper choice of linguistic components and discourse patterns adds a special dimension to argumentation schemata. According to Dolinina and Cecchetto, the politeness-relevant packaging of discourse adds a zero step to the normative stages of an argumentative discussion (establishing hierarchical relations as such) and implies that these relations should be permanently aligned by using correct language forms and discourse patterns.
Lauerbach (2007) also put forward the idea that argumentation theory can aid discourse analysis not only in describing the types of argumentation found in discourse data, but also in evaluating the soundness of the arguments. The author stated that being able to assess the quality of argumentation is important for analyzing particular types of media interview formats that do not favor dialectical argumentation. The findings showed that even in the context of a political controversy, the genre of the political celebrity talk show interview is a format which disfavors an attitude of critical doubt. It lends itself to exploitation by the politician who is able, through subtle changes of footing, and with the support of the host, to pursue his political agenda. (1388)

The researcher also emphasized the usefulness of an integrated approach. As opposed to the rational logic of argumentation analysis, the study of emotions in conflict often receives little attention in discourse analysis. It is therefore necessary to point toward gaps in connecting the two streams of research and toward a more holistic understanding of the role of emotions in conflict (Nair 2008). For instance, Langlotz and Locher (2012) spoke for a discursive approach to studying the emotional stance in conflict and disagreements as online disagreement linguistic data reveal the notable presence of an emotional stance through conceptual implication, explicit expression, and emotional description.

To sum up, diplomatic conflict should be viewed as an international and intercultural phenomenon, with argumentation affecting its dynamics. What can be inferred from the overview of literature is that many theoretical concepts (Oetzel et al. 2001) such as facework, assertiveness, emotions, negotiation strategies, etc., are worth investigating through the prism of discourse analysis of argumentation structure and the dynamics behind it. We are primarily interested in examining how argumentation is structured in an intercultural conflict situation. The bi-level discourse analysis performed in order to explore the structure of argumentation is not applied directly to the event that triggered the conflict.

METHOD

The current study focuses on the media coverage of the closure of the British Council’s offices in Russia in 2008, an event that, as previously mentioned, had far-reaching political implications and caused significant diplomatic tension between the two countries at the time. The texts for analysis come from a wide range of newspapers and magazines ("Argumenty i Fakty"/"Argumenty..."
The seminal work by Wodak and Meyer (2009) explicitly established a theory of discourse and provides methodology for discourse analysis. Linguistically orientated critical discourse analysis scholars understand discourse as a complex bundle of simultaneous and sequential interrelated linguistic acts that manifest themselves within and across the social fields of action as thematically interrelated semiotic, oral, or written tokens, very often as “texts,” that belong to specific semiotic types, that is, genres (Wodak and Meyer 2009, 21).

To distinguish between macro- and microstructures, Jaeger (1993) introduced the idea of the content-oriented step of structure analysis and the language-oriented step of fine analysis (25). Structure analysis implies examining the general themes covered by the media, whereas fine analysis focuses upon context, text surface, and rhetorical means. Examples of linguistic instruments are figurativeness, vocabulary, and argumentation types. Fine analysis also suggests the analysis of the intrinsic logic and composition of texts, implications, and insinuations that are implicit in some way, actors (persons, pronominal structure), references, and particulars on the sources of knowledge, and so on.

Teun van Dijk (2003) generally argued that the focus of study will in practice be on those properties that can vary as a function of social power. Van Dijk therefore suggested that the analysis should concentrate on the following linguistic markers: word order and lexical style, coherence, local semantic moves such as disclaimers, topic choice, speech acts, schematic organization, rhetorical figures, syntactic and propositional structures, turn takings, etc. He proposed that the analytical procedure should consist of six steps: 1) analysis of semantic macrostructures: topics and macropropositions; 2) analysis of local meanings, where the many forms of implicit or indirect meanings, such as implications, presuppositions, allusions, vagueness, omissions, and polarizations are especially interesting; 3) analysis of “subtle” formal structures: here most of the linguistic markers mentioned are analyzed; 4) analysis of global and local discourse forms or formats; 5) analysis of specific linguistic realizations, for example, hyperbolas, litotes; and 6) analysis of context.

As observed by van Dijk (2003), discourse analysis describes text in terms of theories applicable to several levels of discourse, each of them having its own characteristics. Based on this approach, discourse analysis of media texts is conducted on both a macro level (the components, structure, and logic of argumentation) and a micro level (semantic interconnections and the formation of meanings in a text).
In this research a mixed methodology was applied: each of the texts in the sample was analyzed on a macro level, following van Dijk’s analytical procedure, and a micro level, after Jaeger’s language-step analysis. The macro-level analysis involved reconstructing the key components of argumentation (claims and subclaims); at the micro-analysis stage finer, subtler structures, such as topical lexemes and their interconnections, were studied.

**Discourse Analysis: Macro Level**

The macro analysis of the selected samples is premised on the assumption that media texts should be viewed as argumentative discourse. Argumentation is regarded as having a hierarchical structure (Kulikova 1989; Vasiliev 1993); all the communicative components of a text are subordinate to its main communicative purpose, whether or not it is explicitly verbalized. As argumentation is based on logical relationships between its constituent elements, a logical model is applied to analyzing the structure of argumentation in media texts. This logic model is semantically determined (Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004) and implies dividing the content of a text into three parts: claim, complex argument, and conclusion.

Under the premise that deductive and inductive reasoning can be used to link a claim and an argument, an article from the “Русский Newsweek” (“Russian Newsweek”) magazine (dated January 27, 2008) is analyzed to define the prevalent type of reasoning. We draw on certain basic elements of the text analysis performed by Permyakova (2009), but the analytical procedures differ in depth and scope: first, in this chapter, a bi-level analysis of the arguments is carried out; second, the different roles of the agents of the conflict are revealed and interpreted; finally, the focus is on the discourse analysis of argumentation in the conflict dynamics. The focal claim of the article can be formulated as follows:

Москва преследует Британский совет по политическим мотивам и за нарушение российских законов. (Moscow persecutes the British Council for political reasons and for infringing Russian legislation.)

This is a complex factual claim, and it is implicit. To see how the argumentation works, it should be broken down into three simple statements or subclaims:

Москва преследует Британский совет. (Moscow persecutes the British Council.)

Британский совет нарушает российские законы. (The British Council infringes Russian Legislation.)
Мотивы преследования Британского совета—политические. (The reasons for persecuting the British Council are political.)

Each of the statements has a supporting argument. Let us start by analyzing the first of the statements that make up the focal claim:

Москва преследует Британский совет. (Moscow persecutes the British Council.)

The author of the article uses both factual and evaluative arguments to prove the statement. The first argument reads:

Российско-британские отношения стремительно ухудшились весь прошлый год, а в этом году начались со скандала, от которого до разрыва отношений уже один шаг. (Russia-U.K. relations deteriorated rapidly in the course of last year, and the beginning of this year was marked by a scandal indicating that a breakoff is only a step away.)

This is an evaluative argument used by the author to make an overall assessment of the relations between Russia and the United Kingdom. The author makes a generalization, which means that the first part of the claim and the argument are linked by deductive reasoning.

The next argument is factual and relates to the specific actions taken by the Russian Foreign Office:

В декабре российский МИД, ссылаясь на проблемы с правовым статусом, потребовал с 1 января закрыть филиалы БС в Екатеринбурге и Петербурге. (In December the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation demanded that the British Council’s offices in Yekaterinburg and St. Petersburg be closed as of 1 January on the grounds that there are problems with its legal status.)

This argument is linked to the first part of the claim by inductive reasoning as it contains a specific observation.

Factual and evaluative arguments are put forward by some of the Russian government officials involved in resolving the conflict, including representatives of the Federal Security Service.

“Мы будем действовать через библиотеки и вузы,”—говорил во вторник представитель МИДа в городе Сергей Иванов.—“Если у Британского совета останутся какие-то партнеры, это будет скорее исключение, чем правило.” (We will approach libraries and higher educational institutions,—said Sergey Ivanov, the local representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on Tuesday.—If the British Council still has partners, it will be an exception rather than the rule.)
The above quote contains two arguments supporting the first part of the claim ("Moscow persecutes the British Council"), one of them factual, the other evaluative. The factual argument—the one that refers to approaching libraries and higher educational institutions—describes a specific fact and is therefore connected to the claim by inductive reasoning. The second, evaluative, argument is in effect an assessment of a certain aspect of the situation that the British Council is likely to find itself in, which is also indicative of inductive reasoning being used for linking the argument to the claim.

The next argument relating to the first part of the claim is evaluative, and it also comes up in a quote from one of the interested parties:

А министр Милибэнд прямо так и рассказал в четверг британским парламентариям: "[Российские сотрудники БС] стали объектом очевидного запугивания со стороны собственного правительства." (Minister Miliband literally said the following to members of the British Parliament on Thursday: "[The Russian staff of the British Council] have evidently been exposed to intimidation by their own government.")

This argument, based on its content, can be regarded as being linked to the claim by inductive reasoning. What can additionally be inferred from the quote is that the argument therein, apart from supporting the first part of the claim, simultaneously functions as a subclaim with its own factual arguments connected to it by inductive reasoning:

Во вторник российских сотрудников питерского офиса тоже вызвали в ФСБ. (On Tuesday the Russian staff of the St. Petersburg office were also summoned to the Federal Security Service.)

В Питере к каждому второму сотруднику БС с российским гражданством в ночь на среду еще и явились на дом милиционеры, чтобы вызвать их на следующий день в налоговую полицию. (In St. Petersburg every other British Council employee who is a Russian citizen was visited by the police on Tuesday night in their homes, and required to present themselves at the Tax Police office the next day.)

The arguments provided here are linked to the principal subclaim by inductive reasoning, which follows from the fact that they contain specific examples:

Российские власти преследуют Британский совет довольно давно. Сначала по налогам, а с прошлого года были отменены курсы английского языка—российские власти посчитали их проведение коммерцией, и курсы не вписались в принятый в 2006 г. новый закон о некоммерческих организациях (НКО). (The Russian authorities have been persecuting the British Council for a long time. It started off with tax-related issues, and last year English courses
were canceled—the Russian authorities classified them as a commercial activity, and as a result the courses were seen as failing to conform to the provisions of the new nonprofit organizations [NPO] act introduced in 2006.)

В декабре российский МИД вообще потребовал свернуть всю работу региональных филиалов, указав на несоответствие их деятельности новым законам. (In December the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation went as far as to demand that regional offices terminate their operations on the grounds that they do not conform to the new legislation.)

Let’s now turn to analyzing the arguments relating to the second subclaim, which implies that the British Council’s actions are at variance with Russian legislation:

Британский совет нарушает российские законы. (The British Council infringes Russian Legislation.)

The first argument supporting this subclaim reads:

Британский совет ведет провокационные игры, втягивая в них российских граждан. (The British Council is playing provocative games and dragging Russian citizens into them.)

This is an implicit evaluative argument connected to the subclaim by inductive reasoning, which can be inferred from the content of the argument (illustration of the British Council’s illegitimate methods). In addition to being an argument, it is also a subclaim with its own evaluative arguments:

Англичане сделали вид, что не слышали [когда МИД потребовал закрытия филиалов]. (The Brits pretended not to have heard [the Ministry of Foreign Affairs demand the closure of the British Council’s regional offices].)

Екатеринбургские власти явно старались не пускать в ход тяжелую артиллерию, рассчитывая, вероятно, на более мягкую длительную осаду. (The Yekaterinburg authorities were obviously trying not to use any heavy artillery as they seemed to envisage a less fierce, protracted siege.)

As is evident from the content of the arguments provided, they are both linked to the subclaim by inductive reasoning.

The final subclaim (Мотивы преследования Британского совета—политические. [The reasons for persecuting the British Council are political]) is supported by the following evaluative argument:

Глава МИДа Сергей Лавров пояснил: истинная причина: “недружественные действия британской стороны, [предпринятые прошлым летом].” (Sergey
Lavrov, the Foreign Minister, explained: the real reason is “the unfriendly actions of the British side [taken last summer].”

This argument, in its turn, functions as a subclaim supported by a complex factual argument:

Летом англичане в ответ на отказ Москвы сотрудничать в экстрадиции обвиняемого в убийстве Литвиненко Андрея Лугового выслали четырех российских дипломатов, приостановили переговоры об ослаблении визового режима, прервали все контакты с ФСБ и усложнили визовую процедуру для российских топчиновников. (In the summer the Brits, in response to Moscow’s refusal to cooperate in the extradition of Andrey Lougovoy, who had been accused of murdering Litvinenko, expelled four Russian diplomats, suspended the negotiations on a more liberal visa regime, terminated all contact with the Federal Security Service, and complicated the visa procedures for Russian top officials.)

This argument is linked to the subclaim by inductive reasoning.

As can be inferred from the above, the argumentation structure of the article under study shows a prevalence of inductive reasoning over deductive reasoning in connecting the claims to the arguments. This is due to the fact that the argumentation is based primarily on factual arguments, which can be put down to the communicative purpose of the article—conveying information rather than performing an overall analysis of the situation. The research findings also suggest that official spokesmen tend to use inductive reasoning in argumentation, whereas journalists seem to prefer deductive reasoning. The latter causes arguments to be expressed and perceived emotionally, but contributes little, if anything, to conflict resolution. Overall, the macro analysis of the argumentation structure of conflict-related discourse shows that in political and social contexts, it is not the choice of argument, factual or evaluative, that really matters (presumably because both sides of a conflict know and share each other’s views up to a point), but the preferred line of reasoning.

**Discourse Analysis: Micro Level**

We will now focus on the microstructure of the text and analyze how the concept of “agent” (initiator of action) is expressed through the use of lexical units functioning syntactically in sentences. To streamline the analytical procedure, the data are categorized as follows: 1) the lexemes denoting the agents of the conflict on the Russian side; 2) the lexemes denoting the agents of the conflict on the British side; and 3) the lexemes denoting the conflict per se (table 9.1).
Table 9.1. Lexemes denoting the agents of the conflict and lexemes denoting the conflict per se

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian side</th>
<th>British side</th>
<th>Conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Мы; Москва; российские законы; российский МИД; глава МИД Сергей Лавров; российские сотрудники питерского офиса БС; ФСБ; каждому второму сотруднику БС с российским гражданством; миллионеры; налоговая полиция; российские власти; российские граждане; екатеринбургские власти.</td>
<td>Британский совет; филиалы БС в Петербурге и Екатеринбурге; партнеры БС; министр Милибэнд; британские парламентарии; российские сотрудники БС; англичане.</td>
<td>Мотивы преследования; российско-британские отношения; ухудшение; разрыв отношений; конфликт; скандал; проблемы с правовым статусом; исключение (правило). объект очевидного запугивания собственного правительства; налоги; курсы английского языка; коммерция; новый закон о некоммерческих организациях (НКО); курсы; работа региональных филиалов; несоответствие их деятельности новым законам; российские законы; провокационные игры; закрытие филиалов; тяжелая артиллерия; мягкая длительная осада; истинная причина — “недружественные действия британской стороны”; отказ Москвы; экстрадиция обвиняемого в убийстве Литвиненко Андрея Лугового; переговоры об ослаблении визового режима; все контакты с ФСБ; визовая процедура для российских топчиновников.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We; Moscow; Russian legislation; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov; the Russian staff of the British Council’s office in St. Petersburg; the Federal Security Service; every other British Council employee who is a Russian citizen; policemen; the Tax Police; the Russian authorities; Russian citizens; the Yekaterinburg authorities.</td>
<td>The British Council; British Council offices in St. Petersburg and Yekaterinburg; the British Council’s partners; Minister Miliband; members of the British Parliament; the Russian staff of the British Council; the Brits.</td>
<td>The reasons for persecuting; Russia-U.K. relations; deterioration; breakoff; conflict; scandal; problems with its legal status; exception (rule); evident exposure to intimidation by their own government; taxes; English courses; commercial activity; the new nonprofit organizations (NPO) act; the courses; the operations of the regional offices; failure to conform to the new legislation; Russian legislation; provocative games; the closure of the offices; heavy artillery; a less fierce, protracted siege; the real reason is “the unfriendly actions of the British side”; Moscow’s refusal; the extradition of Andrey Lougovoy, who had been accused of murdering Litvinenko; the negotiations of a more liberal visa regime; all contact with the Federal Security Service; the visa procedures for Russian top officials.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All of the lexemes denoting the agents of the conflict on the Russian side emphasize the social, institutional, or political status of the agent, for example, МИД (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation), российские власти (the Russian authorities), and граждане (citizens). Additionally, this category includes lexical units that indicate the professional status of the agent, which is mostly associated with defense and law enforcement agencies: налоговая полиция (the Tax Police), милиционеры (policemen), and ФСБ (the Federal Security Service).

The lexemes denoting the agents of the conflict on the British side bear the following semantic content: nationality—англичане (the Brits), job titles—министр (minister), and представитель (representative). Notably, the conflict involves the legislative branch of the government on British side and the executive branch only on the Russian side.

As table 9.1 clearly shows, the highest proportion of lexical units (approximately 70 percent) representing the various agents of the conflict situation is used to characterize the conflict itself, for example, преследование (persecution), разрыв (breakoff), конфликт (conflict), скандал (scandal), ухудшение отношений (deterioration of the relations), and исключение (exception). This category also contains a number of lexemes that refer to the legal issues underlying the conflict: мотивы преследования (the reasons for persecuting), несоответствие законам (failure to conform to the legislation), and новый закон о некоммерческих организациях (the new nonprofit organizations act). Another clearly identifiable group of lexical items can be semantically classified as “business/economics-related”: коммерция (commercial activity), курсы английского (English courses), and работа региональных филиалов (the operations of the regional offices). We can also find “military” metaphors in this category: осада (siege), тяжелая артиллерия (heavy artillery), and ФСБ (the Federal Security Service). Finally, there are lexemes relating to diplomatic practice, for example, переговоры об ослаблении визового режима (the negotiations on a more liberal visa regime) and визовая процедура для российских топчиновников (the visa procedures for Russian top officials).

To summarize, what can be inferred from the results of the discourse analysis of media texts on a microlevel is that the key factors triggering or exacerbating intercultural conflict are the following: the different historical perspectives of the parties to a conflict, the differences in their respective legislation and legal practices, and involvement of defense and law enforcement agencies in the conflict and the resolution thereof (sometimes seen as “compensating” for insufficient diplomatic endeavor).

At the same time, the micro analysis shows that the potential for resolving intercultural conflict lies in common diplomatic practices and procedures.
Notably, it is the media that seem to contribute quite substantially to conflict escalation by using vocabulary that bears a negative evaluative connotation, for example, скандал (scandal), разрыв (breakoff), конфликт (conflict), and ухудшение (deterioration).

Overall, we can conclude that a bi-level discourse analysis of media texts built around intercultural (diplomatic) conflict situations results in a better understanding of the nature and dynamics of the conflict depicted therein as it enables the reader to “restore” the implicit semantic connections between concepts, claims, and arguments and thus gain a clearer, more balanced view of the situation.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

On the macrolevel, the results of analyzing the argumentative structure of discourse show that dealing with situations of diplomatic conflict is not so much about the choice of argument as the preferred line of reasoning: official spokesmen tend to use inductive reasoning in argumentation, while journalists appear to lean toward deductive reasoning. The latter contributes to the argument being emotionally charged and therefore eliciting an emotional response, but does little to resolve the conflict, for example, преследование (persecution), разрыв (break-off), запугивание (intimidation), тяжелая артиллерия (heavy artillery), осада (siege), and недружественный (unfriendly).

The microlevel discourse analysis reveals that the major sources of intercultural diplomatic conflict as represented in media texts are the different historical perspectives of the two parties (новый закон/ a new law), differences in their respective legal systems, and involvement of law enforcement agencies in conflict resolution (ФСБ/ the Federal Security Service, налоговая полиция/ the Tax Police, милиционеры/ policemen). These findings are in line with Ting-Toomey’s (1999) observation that conflicts vary in a number of aspects, including the use of factual-inductive style or axiomatic-deductive style vs. affective-intuitive style.

In view of the unavoidable limitations of the current study, the following aspects could be considered as prospects for further research. In addition to the media genres covered in this chapter—editorials and news reports—various alternatives could be examined, for example, briefing interviews and press conferences with diplomatic officials and spokespersons and/or other actors involved. In the modern world, social networks contribute to formatting the agenda for public diplomatic speaking too, therefore microblogs with posts and comments also deserve attention. This would seem relevant within
the broader context of convergence of diplomatic communication, public relations, and organizational strategic communication (Arno 1984; Chen 2012; Van Dyke and Verčič 2009).

Apart from a detailed analysis of the components of the conflict on the Russian side, a comprehensive coverage of the British side of the conflict is necessary, with particular reference to the disparity between executive and legislative powers in different countries and nations. The research could be extended to include a number of factors that impact cross-cultural communication, for example, the intensity of emotional response in diplomatic discourse, the differing types of reasoning in argumentation, and so forth. Additionally, although the conflict analyzed in this chapter is bilateral, its consequences may have affected decision making on a larger scale. The trigger factors behind a bilateral conflict, such as changes in legislation, may directly or indirectly affect other sides and countries, turning the conflict into a multilateral one (Oetzel, Dhar, and Kirschbaum 2007). Though the conflict is presented as “country-specific,” in other words “local,” it might be considered within the global-local framework (L’Etang 2009; Shuter 2012; Stevenson 1994).

Finally, the timeline for research was limited to the closure of the British Council’s offices in Russia from 2008 to early 2009. It seems logical that intercultural (diplomatic) conflicts should be considered in time series, with the preceding events (functioning as the reasons for the given conflict) and the subsequent events. It would be interesting to observe the influence of “cultural memory” on international relations and conflict resolution over time and to determine critical factors contributing to peace-making efforts between countries (Avruch and Black 1993; Dodd 1991; Hall 2005).

In view of the fact that, paradoxical as it may seem, research on diplomatic discourse as a specific type of intercultural communication is rather fragmentary, this chapter is intended to contribute to making this phenomenon an object of systematic theoretical study. Its potential also lies in raising awareness of the need for both parties to a conflict to provide a more balanced view of the conflict situation by using inductive reasoning and a higher proportion of emotionally neutral vocabulary. Empirical evidence suggests that correctly structured and appropriately represented diplomatic discourse, as communicated by contemporary mass media, can be regarded as a powerful tool for preventing/resolving conflict in intercultural contexts.

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