

THE PRAGMATICS OF PERSUASION IN CONTEMPORARY MEDIA DISCOURSE

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Abstract. *This thesis examines persuasion in media discourse as a key communicative strategy influencing audience attitudes and behavior. It analyzes its structure, mechanisms, and techniques, and distinguishes persuasion from manipulation, emphasizing its openness and role in achieving communicative goals.*

Keywords: *media discourse, persuasion, speech influence, communicative strategy, manipulation, pragmatics, audience, media communication.*

Persuasion is one of the methods of exerting influence and represents a type of activity aimed at changing people's views, attitudes, and behavior. In media discourse, persuasion serves to shape and transform the audience's attitude toward certain events, products, services, or social issues. It is a process of transmitting evaluations and attitudes designed to influence the addressee's decision-making. In contemporary media space, persuasion is one of the most important strategies of mass communication, performing not only an informational function but also contributing to the construction of the audience's worldview. The process of persuasion includes the following elements:

- **the subject of persuasion** – mass media, media organizations, journalists, bloggers, advertisers, PR specialists, content creators, and other participants of media communication. The subject regulates the audience's activity, encourages it to initiate, change, or complete certain actions, and influences its decision-making, beliefs, and perception of reality;

- **the object of persuasion** – the mass audience, media consumers, specific social groups, and target audiences to which advertising or media messages are directed;

- **means of persuasion** – speech, media texts, advertising messages, audiovisual tools, images, videos, real behavioral models, simulation of communicative situations, and other media resources;

- **the procedure of persuasion** – processes of selecting, processing, encoding, transmitting, and receiving information by the audience.

Media discourse is characterized by psychologism in exerting influence, which is associated with a planned impact that the addressee may be subjected to. However, such an effect can only be achieved when the recipient is ready to perceive the media message.

Thus, in the communicative process, the addressee acquires a relatively equal position with the addresser. The acceptance of an argument depends not only on the evidence provided by the media author but also on the addressee's ability to understand, interpret, and evaluate these arguments. Persuasion becomes possible if the target audience is able to compare different viewpoints and analyze systems of arguments—in other words, if it can comprehend and critically assess the information presented to it. This implies that successful persuasion requires a convergence between the logic of the influencing subject and the cognitive characteristics of the recipient. Therefore, special attention must be paid to the ethnopsychological characteristics of the audience, including the social, national, religious, and cultural factors that influence how media messages are perceived.

Persuasion occupies a central place in media discourse, since its primary goal is to convince the audience of the addresser's point of view. I. I. Tokareva defines persuasion as “a socially verbal influence aimed at transforming a fragment of the addressee's conceptual worldview so that it corresponds to the addresser's worldview and the world aligns with words.” This definition remains relevant in media communication, as media texts shape the audience's perception, evaluation, and interpretation of reality. Persuasion can be realized explicitly or implicitly across various communicative domains, genres, and registers. In media discourse, explicit persuasion is expressed through open appeals, recommendations, advertising messages, and evaluative statements, whereas implicit persuasion is implemented through linguistic units, presuppositions, connotations, metaphors, symbolic images, and other hidden pragmatic means. The result of persuasive influence may manifest in the recipient acquiring new knowledge, attitudes, or beliefs. Therefore, persuasion functions as one of the key mechanisms of media communication.

Language is a powerful tool that influences human consciousness. Linguistic resources enable media authors to construct a desired representation of reality, shape interpretation, manage audience perception, and assign positive or negative evaluations to events. Through media texts, not only information is transmitted, but also specific attitudes toward events, individuals, products, or social processes are formed. Thus, persuasion is a crucial means of achieving communicative goals in media discourse. In modern media communication, journalists, bloggers, advertising copywriters, PR specialists, and other media actors use persuasion as an effective strategy of speech influence. Persuasion implies encouraging others to adopt a certain opinion, revise their views, or perform specific actions. In this sense, persuasion can be interpreted as a tool of influence and control in mass communication. In media communication, persuasion serves to influence audience consciousness and shape positive attitudes toward specific information, ideas, products, or services, thereby achieving communicative objectives. One of the main functions of media discourse is to attract audience attention, engage interest, and direct it toward certain

communicative goals. Therefore, the strategy of persuasion operates closely in connection with the informational function of media. In particular, in advertising, PR, and mass media, persuasion not only transmits information but also motivates the audience to make specific decisions.

Persuasion presupposes the conscious reception and understanding of information by individuals. The addressee analyzes, evaluates, and compares the received information with prior knowledge. Therefore, persuasion is closely connected with cognitive activity and requires logically grounded arguments and evidence. The effectiveness of persuasion largely depends on the audience's level of knowledge, communicative experience, and ability to critically process information. In contrast, manipulation is often aimed at bypassing critical thinking and influencing the subconscious of the recipient. In manipulative communication, the audience is often unaware of the influence being exerted or does not fully understand its real purpose. Thus, the difference between persuasion and manipulation lies in the openness of communicative intent and the degree of freedom of choice available to the addressee. As noted above, persuasion differs from manipulation in that it exerts open influence on consciousness while preserving the recipient's freedom of choice. The addressee may accept or reject the ideas being communicated. However, in modern media discourse, persuasion is often intertwined with manipulative elements. In particular, in advertising texts, political advertising, PR materials, and social media content, persuasion and manipulation frequently coexist.

The effectiveness of persuasion depends to a certain extent on the audience's trust in the information source, the content of the message, its mode of presentation, and the communicative situation. Researchers note that identical messages may have different persuasive effects in different communicative contexts. Therefore, media authors select communicative strategies based on the audience's needs, interests, and expectations. There are various methods of persuasion, including argumentation, propaganda, proof, informing, explanation and clarification, refutation, advice, recommendation, instruction, command, suggestion, indirect approval, and others. These methods may be used individually or in combination within media discourse. All of them aim to influence the audience's views, evaluations, and behavior and ensure the pragmatic effectiveness of media communication. Thus, persuasion is one of the key communicative-pragmatic categories of media discourse. It plays an important role in organizing interaction between participants of media communication, shaping audience attitudes and evaluations, and achieving communicative goals. In the process of persuasion, the relationship between addresser and addressee, the content of information, its mode of presentation, and the communicative situation are of particular importance.

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