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**DISCOURSE STRATEGIES IN ENGLISH**  
**(ON THE EXAMPLE OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING MEDIA PERSONALITIES SPEECHES)**

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**ДИСКУРСИВНІ СТРАТЕГІЇ В АНГЛІЙСЬКОМУ МОВЛЕННІ**  
**(НА ПРИКЛАДІ ПРОМОВ АНГЛОМОВНИХ МЕДІА-ОСОБИСТОСТЕЙ)**

***Objective.** The objective is to find out the effectiveness of using discourse strategies in English to facilitate communication between representatives of different socio-cultural environments.*

***Methods.** The main scientific results are obtained using a complex of general scientific methods, method of systematization, theoretical method, component analysis, special linguistic methods which allow to consider language structures to understand the communicative potential in the context of discourse.*

***Results.** The modern discourse of mass communication includes various discursive practices that form the general field of discourse. Mass media discourse in contemporary society, which has a persuasive character, is constructed as a mechanism of influence on the intellectual, emotional and volitional aspects of the addressee. It uses both logical argumentation techniques and emotional and imaginative means of influence, and involves various methods and forms of influence – infection, suggestion (or compulsion), manipulation (including using neurolinguistic programming techniques (Milton model, reframing, anchoring, etc.).*

*The authors analyse English-speaking media personalities speeches from the point of view three main discourse strategies: strategy of theatricality, overstatement strategy, understatement strategy. The study of discourse strategies in English-speaking contexts reveals the use of various rhetorical devices, manipulation of linguistic resources, appeals to the emotional state of the listener and argumentation techniques.*

*The analysis of practical examples presented in the videos from various fields, such as political, humorous, media or television discourse, helps to gain a deeper understanding of the use and necessity of discourse strategies in specific contexts, and this approach promotes critical thinking and understanding of the importance of effective communication, in particular between the listener and the speaker.*

***Key words:** discourse, strategy, strategy of theatricality, overstatement strategy, understatement strategy*

## **Introduction**

Discourse strategies are the key means of influencing the audience and forming semantic language constructions. These strategies can include the use of rhetorical devices, manipulation of different means of communication, appealing to the audience's feelings and building arguments, and their mastery is essential for improving the effectiveness of interpersonal communication in various linguistic and cultural scenarios.

The application of different classifications of discourse strategies allows to see different perspectives of speech analysis and enrich our understanding of communication processes, while the analysis of practical examples of their application in different areas of speech, such as political, humorous, media or television discourse, allows to gain a deeper understanding of communication processes in specific contexts.

The list of scholars who have studied the topic of discourse, discourse strategies and their use includes: N. Arutiunova, who studied the topic of discourse in detail and gave it the most thorough interpretation; D. Gumpertz, who identified two main types of discourse strategies: aggressive and non-aggressive; O. Mikhalova, who focused on discourse strategies of the political context, in particular, the strategy of theatricality, the overstatement strategy and the understatement strategy, but which can be applied in the analysis of examples of other types of discourse; T. Van Dyke and his classification of three main types of discourse strategies: pragmatic, semantic and rhetorical discourse strategies; Al Zahran Alisar, who presented a more structured scheme of discourse strategies by T. Van Dyke, and emphasised the main markers of the peculiarities of pragmatic, semantic and rhetorical discourse strategies; A. Shuhaiev, who analysed the impact of discursive strategies and tactics on the construction of a positive image, in particular on the example of the UN; O. Semenets, who considered the patterns of influence of discursive modern media on the recipient.

**The objective** is to find out the effectiveness of using discourse strategies in English to facilitate communication between representatives of different socio-cultural environments, to compare them and find out their significance in everyday life.

## **Methods**

The main scientific results are obtained using a complex of general scientific methods that ensure the reliability of information with references to real scientific research on the topic of discourse and discourse strategies; systematisation which helps to classify the speeches of media personalities presented in the practical part; theoretical method – to understand the main theoretical concepts and approaches that underlie the study and build your own hypotheses and assumptions based on the theoretical framework; component analysis – to break down the basic concepts of discourse strategies into their constituent parts for better understanding language environment; special linguistic methods which allow to consider language structures, in particular grammatical structures, to understand the communicative potential in the context of discourse.

## **Results and Discussions**

Discourse, as one of the key elements of communication, plays an important role in shaping the socio-cultural structure and is one of the main ways in which people interact and influence each other. Therefore, in fact, discourse is the subjective basic meaning of language in written or spoken communication, in the context in which it occurs [3]. It typically emerges from influential social systems such as media, providing a framework for communication and cognition that shapes our lives, relationships and society. As a result, it influences our understanding of the world at any given moment. Sociologists view discourse as a dynamic force that not only shapes our thoughts, beliefs and values, but also influences our interactions, identities and behaviours, thus playing a key role in shaping both individual and social realities. Some discourses, known as dominant discourses, dominate the mainstream and are considered true, normal and acceptable, while others are marginalised, stigmatised, and considered wrong, radical and even dangerous [6].

There are many rules that people accept in their lives and perceive as the norm, but this norm is not the same for everyone. Such rules can be either explicit, expressed in laws, religious doctrines or social norms, or implicit, embodied in cultural stereotypes or common beliefs. Discourse plays a

key role in transmitting this knowledge and beliefs across generations. It serves as a means of communication that allows people to discuss, persuade and communicate their ideas, values and beliefs. Through discourse, we decide how to perceive the world around us, how to form our identity and how to interact with other members of society. The richness and diversity of cultural beliefs and rules reflect the complexity and uniqueness of each society, which is why there is a need for an in-depth study of discourse.

The modern discourse of mass communication includes various discursive practices that form the general field of discourse. Mass media discourse in contemporary society, which has a persuasive character, is constructed as a mechanism of influence on the intellectual, emotional and volitional aspects of the addressee. It uses both logical argumentation techniques and emotional and imaginative means of influence, and involves various methods and forms of influence – infection, suggestion (or compulsion), manipulation (including using neurolinguistic programming techniques (Milton model, reframing, anchoring, etc.).

Discourse strategies in English are a key aspect of communication that chooses the way in which speech is organised and perceived. This topic develops the diverse ways in which speakers use language to achieve their communicative goals, including persuasion, conviction, influence and identity formation. The study of these allows us to identify the influence of cultural, social and individual factors on language practice. Such strategies and tactics can affect speech even in the form of implicit elements. This feature can be revealed through the use of manipulative techniques both in media discourse and in ordinary everyday speech. In the global information environment, discursive strategies and tactics are used to create a positive image of a person or organisation. The speaker chooses the optimal verbal means depending on his/her motives and goals to realise the communicative intention [5, p. 108–111]. Therefore, in this case, it is not so much the speech itself that is important, but rather the projection of information directed at the listener. Sociolinguist John Joseph Gumpertz distinguishes between two main types of discourse strategies: aggressive and peaceful. He emphasises that these strategies make up a significant part of our daily communication. According to Gumpertz, discourse strategies are a fundamental principle of human self-organisation, aimed at both competition and cooperation, which creates a logical system out of the chaos of disorganised human relations [4, p. 42].

It is important to note that a language strategy can be seen as a plan or a general direction aimed at achieving the speaker's communicative goal, while language tactics are specific steps or actions used to implement this strategy [1, p. 18].

The analysis of discourse strategies in English speech, in particular on the example of English-speaking media personalities, reveals the uniqueness and effectiveness of communication in the modern world. Considering the speeches of such media personalities as: Shane Gillis, Rory Stewart, Egobunma Kelechi Nwodim, Donald Trump and Joe Biden, we can identify various discursive strategies that they use to achieve their own goals in the perception of the audience, in the face of a lack of information about the actions of the partner. The choice of discourse strategy depends on a number of cognitive prerequisites, when the addressee correlates his communicative goal with a specific speech expression, using verbal units of different levels and ways of their representation.

In the process of critical discourse analysis of speeches by English-speaking media personalities, we will use the classification proposed by O. Mikhalova, which distinguishes three main strategies:

- 1) strategy of theatricality;
- 2) overstatement strategy;
- 3) understatement strategy [2, p. 84].

***Strategy of theatricality:***

This strategy aims to create a vivid impression, in particular by influencing the audience. Its successful application is achieved through various tactics, such as persuasion (involving the audience in rallying around a certain goal or common opinion), demarcation (dividing them into ‘us’ and ‘them’) and promises (creating conditional obligations towards the speaker).

The example of the speech of a media personality, stand-up comedian from the *Saturday Night Live show* Shane Gillis, shows the use of certain discourse practices aimed at attracting attention and influencing the audience. Shane Gillis uses indirect persuasion tactics through the strategy of theatricality [2, p. 84]. This is manifested in his speech through the use of the following phrases:

*Most of you probably have no idea, who I am. I was actually – I was fired from this show a while ago, but, you know, don't look that up, please. If you don't know who I am, please don't google that. It's fine don't even worry about it. (5)*

With this statement, the comedian tries to influence the audience by arousing their sympathy or curiosity about his personality, and also avoids possible negative reactions or criticism that may arise from certain aspects of his past. This, in addition, will make the audience laugh. In a manipulative way, he divides himself and the audience into 'us' and 'them' and expects the audience to remove the conventional line between them on their own.

*You remember that, when you were a little boy, you loved your mom, you to the she was the coolest – you remember when you were gay? You remember, when you were just a gay little boy? Every little boy is just their mom's gay best friend, there's zero of difference. (5)*

This is a fragment from Shane's speech, which is also a vivid example of the discourse strategy of theatricality. In the case of this particular phrase of the comedian, the American audience, which is more loyal and tolerant towards sexual orientation issues, can react to it with humour and understanding, unlike the Ukrainian audience, which lives in a more conservative socio-cultural environment. If he had presented this stand-up in Ukrainian to a Ukrainian audience, they might not only not have understood the meaning of the 'gay friend' joke, but also have expressed a likely negative reaction, perceiving it as offensive or inappropriate. Shane also appealed to the pronoun 'you', emphasising the universality of the joke, and then told his childhood story, which figuratively put him close to his audience. In other words, his main goal was to convey his idea through a strategy of theatricality that would have the desired impact on the desired audience. In addition, he aimed to make the audience laugh and draw attention to himself by asking them to recall their childhood, interpreting it in their own way. This proves that the variation in the impact of discourse strategies on different communities emphasises the need to take into account the cultural and social characteristics of the audience when formulating and executing communication acts.

*I'm trying my best. Also, this place is extremely well-lit. I can see everyone not enjoying it... don't clap now, shut up. (5)*

This phrase is used by a stand-up comedian as part of his performance in order to make the audience laugh through a certain manipulation of generalisation and encouragement to action. While this phrase is humorous, it is also used through a strategy of theatricality that is laid out through suggestion. By emphasising the atmosphere in the room with such a joke, he makes his comment very successful.

That is, based on the audience's reaction during the performance, the following conclusions can be drawn: a media personality like Shane Gillis skilfully applies the strategy of theatricality to direct the audience's attention in the direction he wants and to encourage the comedian to think and act in the way he wants.

#### ***Overstatement strategy:***

This strategy is aimed at changing the audience's views and attitudes to the facts by emphasising their own advantages or overstating their own capabilities..

The episode 'Trump Sneakers' (6), from the aforementioned American show, illustrates the famous political figure, Donald Trump, in a humorously mocking way. This video presents several ironically veiled situations that seem to reveal the essence of Trump, his voters and white Americans in general. From a discursive point of view, we can analyse the following phrases:

- *Come on, man, how'd you miss that?*
- *I didn't miss. It went in.*
- *Oh, all right. (6)*

This dialogue, described in the context of a basketball court, reflects the simple dynamics of interaction between participants and the use of the strategy of overstatement by the communicative character. In this context, Shane Gillis, the actor who played Donald Trump in this production, having received Trump sneakers, tried to resort to the tactic of overstatement [2, p. 84] after his attempt to shoot the ball into the basket was unsuccessful. He claimed that, on the contrary, he had succeeded. This provoked a favourable reaction from his teammates, who took his words as truthful. Thus, despite the fact that his words did not correspond to reality, the character managed to create a positive image of himself in the communicative act of interaction with other participants, which is absolutely confirmed by the following dialogue from the same video:

- *So, you`re saying these trump shoes made you good at basketball?*

- *No. They gave me the power to say I`m good at basketball. Then double down on that until people actually start to believe it.* (6)

This fragment of dialogue does not so much reflect the strategy of overstatement itself as it does the benefits of using it. In this situation, the actor says that his main goal was to gain credibility for his statements in order to create a positive image of himself in the eyes of others. He successfully achieved this goal by using an overstatement strategy based on creating a positive image of the addressee through the tactics of elevation and self-justification. Despite the fact that his words absolutely did not reflect reality and the true state of affairs, the hero was able to convince other participants of the opposite. This allowed him to attract the sympathy and support of society. The use of the strategy of overstatement, deviation from objective reality and distortion of the situation contributed to the achievement of the goal of attracting sympathy and trust in his side.

Analysing the leadership contest between real political representatives of the UK on the official Guardian News YouTube channel (2), rather than actors parodying them, we can identify several key points made by these political media, namely, the phrase of Rory Stewart:

*We are in a room with the door and the door is called Parliament and I am the only person here trying to find the key to the door. Everybody else is staring at the walls shouting believe in Britain.* (2)

In the situation presented, Rory metaphorically used the strategy of overstatement to emphasise his uniqueness and effectiveness in the political sphere. By using this strategy, he tried to draw the audience's attention to the aspect of his importance as a political figure and his willingness to take actions that would benefit Britain. His statement that he is the only one among those present who is ready to take certain actions for the benefit of the country allows him to emphasise his need through speech and evoke certain emotional reactions from the audience, which will further contribute to the support of his political positions.

In conclusion, the strategy of overstatement in communication is used to create a positive image of oneself by exalting one's own abilities, achievements or significance. This strategy allows you to attract the attention of the audience, evoke certain emotional reactions and receive approval from them. It is often applied in the political sphere, as political representatives need the approval of the people for their own career development. Also, the discourse strategy of overstatement is often manifested in a humorous context, and, in addition, it is often associated with the projection of political situations on their humorous interpretation.

#### ***Understatement strategy:***

Understatement strategies include a set of tactics that express a negative attitude towards the situation and the opponent, both implicitly and explicitly. This discourse strategy is characterized by the speaker's desire to discredit the opponent through the use of emotionally charged vocabulary and grammatical devices.

Returning to the comedy show Saturday Night Live, we can analyse another example, the episode 'Lisa from Temecula: Sports Bar' (4).- *Why we got to leave? Because of our disability?*

- *You don`t have a disability.*

- *Sir, I will have you know, he is negro divergent.* (4)

This fragment of dialogue from the sketch is an improvisation by the actress, Egobunma Nwodim, as can be seen from the reaction of her colleagues. In the context of the dialogue, she deliberately introduces the difference between a real circumstance and a fictional situation to enhance the comic effect and condemn racism as a phenomenon, while simultaneously condemning the person who supports it. This situation is a kind of discursive understatement strategy with the use of emotionally coloured vocabulary [2, p. 84]. Despite the fact that the strategy is covert, it is used to create a comic effect. The audience understands the message and perceives it as an attempt to show the unacceptability of racism. Thus, in addition to the humorous context, the socio-political context and the challenge of raising public awareness of the problem of racial discrimination are also emphasised.

Returning to such a well-known media personality as Donald Trump, it can be noted that he uses a mixed discourse strategy of understatement and overstatement in his speeches. This discourse analysis focuses on a real person with a serious speech, not an actor who has applied a similar strategy to highlight a media persona in a way that suits him. In the video, the strategy of understatement is contrasted with overstatement, as indicated in his speech at the criminal court in New York, for a violent crime (8), but in this fragment of the speech, the strategy of understatement of the opponent prevails in order to build a negative image of him in the audience by shifting the focus from his shortcomings. This can be seen in his next phrases:

*There was no crime here at all. This is just a way you hurting me in the election, because I'm leading by a lot. We're leading by a lot of numbers, that nobody's ever seen before and they cheating this time they had a different way. This time they have something down and dirty, that no frankly, no other country does, other than a third world country a Banana Republic. (1)*

In this context, a clear example of Trump's use of communication pressure, which is manifested in his repeated statements about the absence of a crime, can be observed. His attempts to implement this strategy in the communication process can be perceived as an attempt not only to influence those accusing him, but also ordinary listeners. By focusing on his high rating and accusing his opponent, i.e. by using the discourse strategy of understatement in a completely transparent way, Trump is trying to gain support from the public. His statements about the absence of a crime, which he repeats over and over again, create the impression of unshakable confidence in his innocence, which can position him as a person who has been slandered.

Looking at the main moments in the first stage of the presidential races in Ohio, namely Joe Biden's speech (3), we can identify his position on his opponent, Donald Trump, through a phrase that can be presented as a discursive strategy of understatement.

*You can't fix the economy, if you can't fix the COVID-19 crisis. And he has no intention to do anything about making it better for you all at home. (3)*

With this phrase, Joe Biden indicates that a presidential candidate who simply does not show interest in the crisis consequences of COVID-19 for the economy and cannot adequately address the needs of people affected by it should not hold this position. By the covid crisis, Biden meant the following: accelerated inflation [8, p. 6], collapse of employment and mass layoffs, as in April the US economy lost about 21 million jobs and the unemployment rate jumped to 14.7% [7, p. 2], and under Trump's presidency, average mortality rates from COVID-19 showed that the US and Italy were the two largest countries economically affected by the virus.

By emphasising this aspect, Biden implies that if Trump is not able to be sufficiently responsible for such issues, he will not be able to successfully address the economic situation as he promised in his early speeches. Thus, Joe Biden focuses attention on the negative aspect of Trump's policies, using this discursive strategy to discredit his opponent and strengthen his own position.

Summing up the discourse strategy of understatement, we can say that it serves to highlight the negative image of the opponent or emphasise his weaknesses, mistakes or shortcomings in communication.

In comedy shows, such as *Saturday Night Live*, the discourse strategy of understatement is applied to create a comic effect and highlight the negative aspects of certain phenomena or stereotypes

through a joke. This can be aimed at criticising social issues, such as racism, and raising the consciousness of the audience. Similar to the strategy of overstatement, it is often used in the political sphere to discredit opponents and strengthen one's own position. It can be seen that political actors use it to highlight the shortcomings and mistakes of their competitors, thus trying to gain support and trust from the audience. In general, the above examples highlight the fact that this strategy can be used to achieve certain communication goals of the addressee and his/her influence on the audience.

### Conclusions

Thus, modern discourse of mass communication includes a variety of discursive practices that are constructed as a mechanism of influence on the intellectual, emotional and volitional aspects of the addressee, using various techniques and forms of influence, including manipulative techniques. The generality and understanding of the discourse of mass communication are becoming important aspects for understanding its impact on society.

The study of discourse strategies in English-speaking contexts reveals the use of various rhetorical devices, manipulation of linguistic resources, appeals to the emotional state of the listener and argumentation techniques. Analysing the speeches of such influential media personalities as Shane Gillis, whose example showed the professional use of the theatricality strategy and, in the role of Donald Trump, the strategy of overstatement; Rory Stewart, who used the strategy of overstatement during his speech; Egobunma Kelechi Nwodim, who used the strategy of understatement to convey the importance of a negative attitude to racism through a comic context; Donald Trump and Joe Biden, who used discursive strategies of understatement in their speeches to better present themselves in contrast to their opponents, we can note that different aspects of their speech have the ability to influence the audience's perception in a certain way.

To sum up, the analysis of practical examples presented in the videos from various fields, such as political, humorous, media or television discourse, helped to gain a deeper understanding of the use and necessity of discourse strategies in specific contexts, and this approach promotes critical thinking and understanding of the importance of effective communication, in particular between the listener and the speaker.

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**Мета.** З'ясувати ефективність використання дискурсивних стратегій в англійській мові для полегшення комунікації між представниками різних соціокультурних середовищ.

**Методи.** Основні наукові результати отримано з використанням комплексу загальнонаукових методів, методу систематизації, теоретичного методу, компонентного аналізу, спеціальних лінгвістичних методів, які дозволяють розглянути мовні структури для розуміння комунікативного потенціалу в контексті дискурсу.

**Результати.** Сучасний дискурс масової комунікації включає різноманітні дискурсивні практики, які формують загальне поле дискурсу. Дискурс мас-медіа в сучасному українському соціумі, що має персуазивний характер, конструється як механізм впливу на інтелектуальні, емоційні та вольові аспекти адресата. При цьому використовуються як прийоми логічної аргументації, так і емоційно-образні засоби впливу, залучаються різні способи й форми впливу – зараження, сугестія (або навіювання), маніпулювання (у тому числі з використанням технік нейролінгвістичного програмування (Мілтон-модель, рефреймінг, якоріння тощо).

Автори аналізують промови англомовних медійних особистостей з точки зору трьох основних дискурсивних стратегій: стратегії театральності, стратегія на підвищення, стратегія на зниження. Дослідження дискурсивних стратегій в англомовних контекстах виявляє використання різноманітних риторичних прийомів, маніпулювання мовними ресурсами, апеляції до емоційного стану слухача та прийомів аргументації.

Аналіз практичних прикладів, представлених у відеороликах з різних сфер, таких як політичний, гумористичний, медійний чи телевізійний дискурс, допомагає глибше зрозуміти використання та необхідність дискурсивних стратегій у конкретних контекстах, а такий підхід сприяє розвитку критичного мислення та розумінню важливості ефективної комунікації, зокрема між слухачем і мовцем.

**Ключові слова:** дискурс, стратегія, стратегія театральності, стратегія на підвищення, стратегія на зниження