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**CONVENTIONAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY  
IMPLEMENTATION IN DISCOURSE PRACTICE ON THE  
NETWORK MEDIA-CONTENT COMMENTARY**

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*Abstract*

The study is devoted to the analysis of the discursive practice of network media content commenting and aims at objectifying the implemented communicative strategies. The object of the research is the speech strategies of introducing the community (us-strategy), modeling conflict and discrediting (us-them-strategy), obstruction of “them”, and other communicative technologies of cooperative speech behavior of digital media content consumers. The general conventional cooperative communication strategy prevails in the discursive practice under study. The strategy manifests itself in the polarizations “us-them”, “friend-foe”, “right-wrong”, “acceptable-unacceptable”, while confrontational strategies of discrediting “them” remain part of the cooperative strategy maintaining solidarity within the community. The presence of common values, understandings, and a cultural code are genre-forming signs of network media content commenting. The discursive practice of Internet commentary on the content of liberal opposition media content primarily unites like-minded people and creates a special hybrid social-virtual space. For this reason, there is almost no polarization of opinions and ratings in the comments to any piece of news. The present study analyzes the implementation of the communicative drama, which is presented as the predictability of the reactions of the online community, the expected ratings and interpretations provided by the selection of news and the features of their presentation. Through this technology, a conventional communication strategy for cooperative speech behavior is also implemented. The empirical base of the study is made up of the comments from the Meduza News and Media and Novaya Gazeta subscribers communities on Facebook, dated from November 2019 to February 2020.

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**Keywords:** Discursive practice, online commentary, communication strategies and tactics, conventional technologies.



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## 1. Introduction

The study of technologies for creating social-virtual communities is undertaken through the analysis of the latest online discursive practices. The discursive practice of commenting on network media content is one of them.

Under the conditions of the transfer of information power to the mass media, social reality is set and changed by a person through one's online discourse activity. This kind of discourse becomes a full-fledged platform for social life and struggle, an analogue of real, street politics. In discursive practice, world modeling of network media network commentary becomes a way of maintaining or changing a social world order acceptable by commenters.

## 2. Problem Statement

**2.1.** The latest discursive practices are formed as a result of global processes such as the mediation of politics and the virtualization of social life. According to the researchers, the development of the modern media system has made it possible to change the public's view of reality itself. "Reality (social reality, any directly inaccessible or remote informative reality) is not provided to us directly, but exclusively through the media" (Datsyuk, 1998, para. 23). The media provides a virtual space where new discursive practices arise, in which social reality is constructed (Kalinkin, 2016; Kozhemyakin, 2016). Speech models and strategies of media discourse become an independent systemic section of media research (Znak: problemnoe pole mediaobrazovaniya, 2019). The discursive practice of commentary also attracts the attention of many researchers (Karpoyan, 2015; Labutina, 2019; Vezhnovets, 2016).

**2.2.** The comments of network media content is researched in various aspects: from the positions of mediallynguistics, the theory of speech exposure and manipulation, the applied visualization tools (Simakova, 2017) and interdiscursive pressure, etc. In the framework of the present paper, the object of research has become the communicative strategies and technologies applied in this discursive practice. As noted in reviews of studies of communicative strategies, a unified theory has not developed yet. Typologies of communicative strategies of different authors differ fundamentally and are based on different classification grounds, from the moral categories of "confrontation - cooperation" (Kirillova, 2012, p. 26) to the degree of innovative ideas (Hulsmann & Pfeffermann, 2011), and it is hardly worth pursuing the goal of theoretical uniformity in the approach to the issue, since a fully comprehensive classification, especially of particular strategies, "seems at the moment impossible due to the diversity of communicative situations" (Shilova & Ugrinovich, 2018, p. 86, 88). Discursive practices constantly arise and rapidly change in the course of sociality virtualization, therefore a research "usually consists of certain techniques of "superficial" analysis that minimizes a priori constructions" (Issers, 2011, p. 231). Many studies of communicative strategies in different types of discourse demonstrate the productivity of the approach (Bykova, 2016; Fetisova, 2018; Gritsenko & Demidova, 2018; Kiryanova, 2015; Zuykova, 2019). The typologies of communication strategies by Datsyuk (1999), distinguishing presentation, communicative and conventional strategies. (Datsyuk, (1999), and Issers (2017), who considered, among others, the general strategy of discrediting and the strategy of maintaining solidarity with the group, as

well as the concepts of cooperative and confrontational communication strategies proposed by Kirillova (2012), are applied in the present study.

### **3. Research Questions**

#### **3.1. Conventional communication strategies in the discursive practice of online commentary**

The concept of a conventional strategy is proposed by Datsyuk in 1999 in relation to the practice of advising a humanitarian or political technologist: “the purpose of the conventional communication strategy of a text or speech is to ensure communication between different segments of the communication environment - the audience of that text or speech (...), and through a whole chain of consensus to get as a result - a convention, that is, such a meaningful agreement within a certain segment or even the whole society which will allow (...) to produce some structure of the communication environment, which will allow reproducing the conventional communication process in the future” (Datsyuk, 1999, para. 37).

It seems that the main features of conventional technologies are clearly visible in the discursive practice of network media content commenting. The presence of common values, understandings and a cultural code are genre-forming signs of network commentary, if to view it as a genre of modern communication. This is manifested in the implementation of strategies for joining the community and maintaining solidarity within it (friend-strategy), strategies for modeling conflict (friend-or-foe-strategy), in creating the image of “friend” common enemy (corrupt state, unjust social system, criminal authority, etc.). The discursive practice of commenting on liberal opposition content, according to the present research observations, unites like-minded people and creates for them a special hybrid social-virtual space. There is almost no polarization of opinions and ratings in the comments on any news, for example:

“The Russian government has resigned. Medvedev is going to be the deputy head of the Security Council” (reference date: 15.01.2020) ([https://meduza.io/news/2020/01/15/pravitelstvo-rossii-podalovotstavku?utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_medium=main&fbclid=IwAR2nwjrR\\_Y0wrNwsFXv3JZupvZz1jNB\\_VD5eBkID5PDmpl-\\_b4NSQdeBd\\_s](https://meduza.io/news/2020/01/15/pravitelstvo-rossii-podalovotstavku?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=main&fbclid=IwAR2nwjrR_Y0wrNwsFXv3JZupvZz1jNB_VD5eBkID5PDmpl-_b4NSQdeBd_s)). Commentators are unanimous in the negative evaluation of the event, which is expressed through tactics of ridicule, symbolic deprivation of high status, accusation, sarcasm, mockery, exposure, hinting (the spelling and punctuation of the authors are hereinafter preserved, the sample is almost continuous):

Elena Potapova: That accounts for the milk in the coconut! The new Health Secretary is raising medicine from its knees!

Stas Bogatin: Everyone has already forgotten that there is something capable of resigning!

Boris Mazur: Multi-move combination!

Vlad Zurati: do not be joyful. They will replace the same ones.

Michael Medvedev: one might think there was a government?

Alexey Moikin: What a bunch of clowns :)

Andrei Petrov: Will anything change?

Olga Tatarskaya: The show began on schedule!

Eugene Snusmumriken: but no one noticed

Zhemel Khayrulloev: It would be better to say that they were detained and criminal cases are brought before the court?))

Stas Yurich: arrested right in the government hall?

Natalya Lenkene: Well, a new position has already been opened for him, work in tandem.

Ole Fanny: The script is so-so, not surprised)) I think that they (the government) decided not to deal with free lunches for schoolchildren and that is why decided to resign!

Michael Minin: Ahah, distract from the constitutional coup?

Svetlana Kireeva: The majority possesses a second citizenship, most likely, and so have decided that it is better to leave right now? While the passports are not taken yet)

Sergey Luetke: And what? As if these people had some value.

Valery Silin: to return to the duties with the Same team members?

Maria Soboleva: Another performance.

Pavel Podkorytov: There has never been such a thing and here again.

Thus, the strategy of discrediting unacceptable for commentators is a means to implement a cooperative conventional strategy of joining a community and maintaining solidarity within it, integrating into a community of like-minded people.

### 3.2. Communicative Drama of Digital Media Content and Comments

By communicative drama, a selection and presentation of news in the considered online media is meant. The communicative drama content selection, again under the tacit convention, provokes a *crony-reader* to the set course and predictability of the ratings and interpretations in the comments, because the authors and readers of the content are people in the same circle, having common grounds and political views. In such communicative drama, the implementation of the conventional communicative strategy and cooperative speech behavior is again traced, for example: “The Russian Prosecutor General’s Office did not find any violations in the declarations of the Moscow prosecutor. Anti-Corruption Foundation reported property worth 3 million euros” ([https://meduza.io/news/2020/01/14/genprokuratura-rossii-ne-obnaruzhila-narusheniy-v-deklaratsiyah-prokurora-moskvy-fbk-soobschal-onezadeklarirovannomimuschestve-na-3-milliona-evro?utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_medium=main&fbclid](https://meduza.io/news/2020/01/14/genprokuratura-rossii-ne-obnaruzhila-narusheniy-v-deklaratsiyah-prokurora-moskvy-fbk-soobschal-onezadeklarirovannomimuschestve-na-3-milliona-evro?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=main&fbclid)). Commentators pick up the topic and understand the hinting, demonstrating the smile of the augurs:

Victoria Agenko: It would be surprising if they have found. So many investigations about the corruption and no criminal cases. Get the case to the piggy bank, when the regime has outlived itself, it will come in handy.

Olga Kuznetsova: needless to say – money shared, never found))

Tatyana Tuzhina: This is where our troubles begin.

Aibulat Bagumanov: The attorney is in a stake.

Olga Ermolina: Always stay by your guys!!!!

Tatyana Esheulova: there's honor among thieves.

Olga Korsakova: one hand washes!

Olga Chumanova Those who stood up for his defense are just like him.

Antei Helios In order to find something, you must search first.

Elena Severina: I mean, I think they've really become a pest.

Lev Gavrilov: So unexpected!

Dmitry Ko Nu: It's so logical! If there is no declaration - there cannot be violations in it!

So, such communicative drama is another manifestation of conventional communicative strategy in the discursive practice under consideration.

### **3.3. Ostracism and discredit in the discursive practice of network media content commenting**

The binary friend-or-foe opposition, characteristic of the network commentary genre, can take the form of ostracism of obvious “strangers” in the subscriber community, which is immediately recognized, and is expelled as a violator of an unspoken convention or a cultural code that unites subscribers. For example:

“Death is not a taboo topic for me, but it is one of the most difficult - both in life and in literature.” Lyudmila Ulitskaya’s new book “About the body of a soul” is a collection of short stories (or, as the writer puts it, “borderline conversations”) ([https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2019/11/17/82761-lyudmila-ulitskaya-smert-tozhe-prinadlezhit-zhizni?utm\\_source=fb&utm\\_medium=novaya&utm\\_campaign=smert-dlya-menya-ne-yavlyaetsya-tabuirovann](https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2019/11/17/82761-lyudmila-ulitskaya-smert-tozhe-prinadlezhit-zhizni?utm_source=fb&utm_medium=novaya&utm_campaign=smert-dlya-menya-ne-yavlyaetsya-tabuirovann)).

Comments:

Anton Malikov: And who is Lyudmila Ulitskaya?

Alexey Bazykin: Why do you need that?

Anton Malikov : Alexey Bazykin, for the overall development) As I just scrolled the post, but I don't know about whom / what it is about)

Leo Irena: Anton Malikov, tell me the crash pad where one can be so out of the loop??

Alexey Bazykin: Anton Malikov, I check your page up and I can say that further development is completely useless to you. You are fully prepared for life in modern Russia.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to trace the implementation of the conventional communication strategy in the discursive practice of network media content commenting.

## **5. Research Methods**

The empirical basis of the study is the comments of the Meduza News and Media subscriber community - <https://www.facebook.com/themeduza/> (404925 people on 01/19/2020) and Novaya Gazeta - <https://www.facebook.com/novgaz/> (201036 people on 01/19/2020) on Facebook, dated from November 2019 - January 2020. The discursive practice of commentary is analyzed implementing a critical discourse analysis based on the idea of language as a means of streamlining social reality.

## 6. Findings

**6.1.** In the discursive practice of the network media content commenting, considered in the liberal opposition media, the cooperative conventional communication strategy is implemented through more specific strategies and tactics. The presence of common grounds and a cultural code are genre-forming features of commentary.

**6.2.** One of the manifestations of the cooperative strategy of maintaining solidarity with the community is the strategy of discrediting opponents, based on the polarizations “us-them”, “friend/foe”, “right vs wrong”, “acceptable vs unacceptable” and so on. The discrediting strategy is implemented in tactics of negative assessment, symbolic deprivation of high status, accusation, sarcasm, mockery, exposure, hinting, etc.

**6.3.** The discursive practice under consideration is characterized by a peculiar communicative drama, which is presented as the predictability of the reactions of the virtual community, provided by the selection of news and the features of their presentation in liberal opposition media. Communicative drama is another manifestation of a conventional communicative strategy in the genre of Internet commentary.

## 7. Conclusion

The discursive commentary practice demonstrates the willingness of network media content consumers to look for online social niche. This intention is fundamental for participating in social life in the online activity form. For this reason, there is no polarization of opinions in the comments. When analyzing the tools of implementing a conventional strategy in the Internet comments, the main communicative intention of the writers is revealed: integration with like-minded people, outlining one’s circle and joining the community of “friends”. Thus, in this discursive practice, certain conventions are concluded and constantly renegotiated daily, a social contract, which is a self-reproducing “moving dialogue” (Datsyuk, 1999) in the process of interaction and coordination of human behavior.

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