MSC 2020
International Scientific and Practical Conference «MAN. SOCIETY. COMMUNICATION»

DISCOURSE PRACTICES OF MEDIA AND WORD ORDER IN THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

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Abstract

The authors investigate structural patterns of discursive practice of presenting business information in news reports. Particular attention is paid to the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the active and passive voice constructions used in informative statements, as well as the sequence of the main parts of the sentence in them. The analysis was based on examples selected by the method of targeted sampling from texts of news genres representing journalistic and corporate discursive media practices. The aim of the study is to identify and describe grammatical structures that are preferable or typical for this type of discursive practice. The lexical-grammatical search function was used based on the materials of the newspaper sub-corps of the National Corps of the Russian Language. The results of the search were subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis. The hypothesis that in the discursive practice of business information in the media it is preferable to use the passive voice and the reverse order of the main parts of the sentence, has been confirmed. This allowed us to identify the main discursive pattern of business news messages. The revealed statistically significant change in the direct word order when using passive voice constructions in business discursive media practices seems quite significant. For a deeper study of this phenomenon, it seems important to continue the study of the reasons for changing the word order in the texts of modern business discourse. Discursive practices such as business writing, consumer and corporate communication may be of most interest here.

Keywords: Discursive pattern, discursive practices, media, the Russian Language, voice, word order

1. Introduction

Social life is represented and mediated by discourse. An analysis of current discursive practices of a particular language allows us to describe the placement of any speech product constructed in this language in the space of meanings, choices, preferences and social relations. The postulated connection of linguistic phenomena and socially significant processes allows us to consider speech activity in a particular social sphere as a discursive practice.

In modern conditions, the universally recognized form of human social experience, shared by all members of the linguistic community at the level of "the way to say this/write about this" ideas, is increasingly shaped by discursive media practices, without which practically no sphere of life can do. Owing to its special role in modern communication, the media discourse not only absorbs the features of speech behavior accepted in different areas of social interaction, but also, in turn, has a noticeable effect on the choice of units and constructions in discursive practices that are traditionally almost incompatible with the media.

A new approach to the study of linguistic phenomena as a means of organizing social experience in the process of verbal communication for some time involves not only the identification of such units and structures, but also a description of the conditions and mechanisms for their selection and functioning. According to Chernyavskaya (2017), "the focus of linguistic developments shifted from questions of in-text organization to the processes of text construction and text perception" (p. 137).

1.1. The study and description of the features of text generation in the process of functioning of the dominant discursive practices to some extent is based on the traditionally distinguished groups of texts - styles, which are "the discourse-forming parameter that groups texts: scientific discourse, journalistic discourse, official business, etc." (Klushina, 2016, p. 80). A special place in the system of modern dominant discursive practices is occupied by the media style, which, according to Klushina (2016), connects the media discourse into a single system (p. 86). Given the all-pervasive nature of media in modern communication, we can talk about the representation in the media discourse and, as a result, in the media style, to one degree or another, of all relevant discursive practices from different areas of social experience. Based on this, it can be assumed that a study of the texts of the media style will allow us to form the most adequate idea of the real functioning of the modern language in different discursive practices.

The most closely related to the concept of media style in its integrative interpretation is the concept of a constructive-style vector (CSV) proposed by Kostomarov (2019) as a tool for describing any specific use of the language. It is the CSV that dictates the selection and arrangement of means of expressing meaning and meaning in various areas of communication. Thus, Kostomarov (2019) considers the linguistic and speech characteristics of a particular discursive practice as a dynamic formation as opposed to a static description of the text as a product of speech with features of one traditionally distinguished functional style.

1.2. When studying discourse as a social practice, it is important to take into account the fact that "discourse allows you to model typical situations" (Krasina, 2016, p. 92).

In turn, Miloslavsky (2019) emphasizes the importance of correlating the images of situations presented in the minds of the participants in communication when, for an accurate understanding of the text, from a certain set of possible meanings, one should choose exactly what is presented in the text created by the speech producer. (p. 734)

If we talk about the level of the language system, the description of the functioning of units of which will allow us to judge the features of the organization of speech in one or another discursive practice, then we can expect that illustrative examples can be found primarily in the syntax. It is at the syntactic level that the reflection of the connection between the cognitive mechanisms for representing the typical situation in discursive practice and the processes of text generation, determined by this conventional representation of the situation, is often more obvious compared to other aspects of the language.

Kozlova (2018) notes that the main task of studying grammar in modern conditions is to identify cognitive structures and mechanisms that correspond to different areas of communication and to describe grammatical categories and their units in the process of functioning in various types of discourse .

It seems that one of the most revealing structural phenomena used to reflect the representation of a typical situation by participants in a particular discursive practice is the word order in the Russian sentence.

2. Problem Statement

Researchers note the heterogeneity of modern communication and identify areas that most vividly demonstrate innovations related to the dynamics of modern speech processes. These areas include Internet communication, advertising communication, media language, business communication and professional communication (Klushina et al., 2019). Changes in these discursive practices have a noticeable effect on changes in the language as a whole, in particular on a change in the construction of sentences, which in the future can affect the syntax system.

These discursive practices use the means of different functional styles, producing a dynamic formation to represent a typical situation - a constructive-style vector. Thus, in media texts, we can expect to find, for example, at the level of syntactic organization, statements of the model and construction, traditionally attributed to different functional styles. For example, Krysin (2003) cites the following fragment from Art. 29 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation: "Everyone is guaranteed freedom of thought and speech. Propaganda and agitation inciting social, racial, national or religious hatred and enmity are not allowed" (p. 401). As you can see, patterns with passive voice and inversion of the main parts of the sentence are given as typical for a business style. In addition to the choice between the real and the passive voice in formalizing the relations between the main members of the proposal, the order of their sequence plays an important role, performing "a number of important functions of both semantic and structural-organizational nature" (Gack, 1990, p. 388).

By examining business and official communications in the media, we could identify the characteristics of text construction in them, considered from the standpoint of the concept of a constructive-style vector. This would allow a more detailed description of the properties of texts generated under certain conditions of communication. The incompleteness of the existing descriptions of the features of business speech outside the official drafting situations is because such characteristics often indicate that some of

their style features are borrowed from the arsenal of official business speech, some from the media, but which ones come from and for what reason, how usually not specified.

2.1. Currently, scientists are talking about the need for a new academic grammar with the inclusion of the results of discursive analysis that would reveal the discursive functions of grammatical categories (Rogova, 2018). A description of the specific type of texts and the use of certain constructions in them will allow us to make assumptions regarding the interpretation of the grounds for choosing one or another language means, since it can be associated with different conditions for the course of discursive practice: for example, the functioning of collateral structures may be associated with the type of discourse and its pragmatic functions (Kozlova, 2018). Paducheva (2012) also drew attention to the difference in the discursive functions of indefinitely personal constructions, in the semantics of which the grammatical representation of the implied subject plays an important role, for example, "the State Duma urged Zelensky to stop interfering in the affairs of Russia" (Opinion, 2020). There are also passive constructions in which the activist is designated only at a cognitive level, for example, "the fire in a hospital in the north of Moscow has been eliminated" (Official site of the Mayor of Moscow, 2020). You can see that such cases are very widespread in modern media.

2.2. Based on the characteristic feature of media texts - global clichés (Dobrosklonskaya, 2008, p. 79), as well as the stereotypical and standard presentation adopted in business discursive practices, within the framework of this article we will consider the grammatical features of sentences preferred in business news media messages.

On the one hand, in news texts, the expected grammatical characteristics of the sentences used will be a direct word order and an active voice. So, for example, in the headings, the semantic subject performing the action (actor) can either be named: "Putin criticized the work of the State Service Portal" (Kommersant, 2020), "weather forecasters warned of an abnormal cooling in Moscow" (Milchenko, 2020); or it can only be implied, and an indication of it appears already further in the text of the article: "Muscovites were warned of a cold snap" (heading), "the supervisor of the Hydrometeorological Center, Roman Vilfand, spoke about the cold snap in Moscow in the middle of next week" (RIA News, 2020).

On the other hand, the most important sign of news texts, which many researchers pay attention to, is the prevalence of passive verb forms in them, which is connected, according to Dobrosklonskaya (2008), "with the desire for the most objective presentation of information, with the deliberate distancing of the producer of the news text from its recipient" (p. 107). For example: "The floodplains of the Moscow River and the environs of Zvenigorod are transferred under development" (heading). "For individual housing construction, personal subsidiary plots or gardening, plots of up to 500 thousand square meters can be allocated" (Darja, 2020).

The choice of the functioning of the category of voice in discursive media practices as the subject of research can be explained by the fact that this syntactic tool expresses the relationship between the subject, action and object, which represents the main characteristics of the discourse. It is precisely this aspect of the study of linguistic phenomena that scholars write about, noting the peculiarity of discourse analysis, which does not introduce a "new toolkit", but is associated with the use of "traditional methods of analyzing the text structure outside a single utterance/text" (Chernyavskaya, 2017, p. 140).

3.   Research Questions

The change in the actual division and the means of its formal expression in the Russian language - the word order - is due to the communicative task, i.e. the speaker's desire to highlight an aspect in a given context or in a given speech situation.

3.1. The study examines some grammatical units and categories in the process of their functioning in discursive media practices. At the same time, the mixing and interpenetration of discourses and their individual practices (inter-discursiveness) deserves special attention (Chernyavskaya, 2017). Modern media are indicative in this respect, since the multicode character, multimedia character, and hypertextuality of most of speech products presented by them really lead to the mutual influence and interpenetration of the mechanisms and means of oral and written speech, to the interaction of different discursive practices. So, news - one of the main media genres - is a special type of discourse, which, according to Van Dijk (2000), is, on the one hand, "the result of the social and professional practice of journalism in certain institutional conditions, and on the other, they are an important condition for successful cognitive processing of texts by both journalists and readers" (p. 230).

3.2. The discursive practice of news media is a complex communicative phenomenon, the analysis of which takes into account the social context, including the characteristics of the participants in communication, features of subject-object relations, information about the processes of production and perception of the message. Plungyan(2003) notes that "the choice of one voice gramme instead of another reflects not so much a change in the real world <...> as a change in how the speaker wants to present the corresponding situation and its participants" (p. 194).

Thus, the task of identifying a pattern for certain discursive practices arises, while a discursive pattern refers to "cognitive patterns that stereotype thinking and are expressed in discourse" (Yacoba, 2019, p. 116). To solve this problem, the most indicative is the description of the choice of the grammatical design of such a discursive pattern. The Usage-based model considers the grammatical phenomena of the language in the dynamics of their formation, taking into account the conditions of the course of discourse. With this approach, special attention is paid to "the relationship of the functional parameters of linguistic units with their frequency and other dynamic indicators relevant to the process of using the language" (Shaposhnikova, 2020, p. 207).

Examples given by L. P. Krysin as samples of a business text or taken from a random selection of the latest news reports, allow us to formulate a hypothesis: in the discursive practice of business information in the media, it is preferable to use the passive voice and the reverse order of the main parts of the sentence.

4.   Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is to identify and describe not just structures that are possible in discursive media practices, but grammatical structures that are preferred or typical for this type of discursive practice. This opens up prospects for the analysis of media discourse and, as Van Dijck (2000) noted, can lead to a new understanding of the processes that are important for studying mass communication (p. 113).

It also seems important to determine the conditions for the selection and use of preferred grammatical structures using a quantitative characteristic of the frequency of occurrence in an array of texts.

As the objectives of the study, we can identify the following:

1. Establishment of preferred forms of voice in business information communications;

2. Establishment of the preferred order of the main parts of the sentence in information business communications;

3. Interpretation of the results.

5. Research Methods

The analysis was based on examples selected by the method of targeted sampling from texts of news genres representing journalistic and corporate discursive practices.

The lexico-grammatical search in the newspaper sub-corps (media of the 2000s) of the National Corps of the Russian Language (National Corps of the Russian Language, 2020) was used.

The analysis of quantitative, linguistic and pragmatic characteristics of the resulting materials was performed.

6. Findings

The first objective of our study is to establish preferred forms of grammatical voice in informational business communications.

To solve this problem, we used the lexical-grammatical search based on the materials of the newspaper sub-corps (media of the 2000s) of the National Corps of the Russian Language. The quantitative results of the obtained issuance allow us to talk about the predominance in the business news of the forms of passive voice in comparison with the forms of active voice by 24.7%.

The second task of our work was to establish the preferred order of the main parts of the sentence in information business communications.

In this part of the study, we also relied on materials from the newspaper sub-corps of the National Corps of the Russian Language (National Corps of the Russian Language, 2020). According to the results obtained, in the constructions of the real voice the preferred word order is the direct order of the main parts of the sentence for the Russian language: the predicate follows the subject in more than 87% of cases. But with regard to statements in which passive voice forms are used, a different picture is observed here: the reverse order of the main parts of the sentence in such constructions is more often than the direct one by almost 8 times, that is, it is preferred in 92.3% of cases.

In a number of situations, this is explained by a progressive structure that defines the structure for the subject: a common definition often follows the defined word than precedes it. But not all cases of inversion of the main parts of a sentence, which significantly prevails in passive statements compared with the direct sequence of the main parts of a sentence, can be interpreted exclusively from structural positions. Obviously, the reason for the statistically significant differences in the choice of word order should have other explanations.

The results of a qualitative analysis of the output materials allow us to say that the use of certain grammatical categories is also due to discursive factors.

6.1. The discursive function of grammatical constructions is connected with what image of the subject or object the author forms and what the role of this image is. So, for example, in order to form a positive image of a company, to emphasize its role in a particular area, active constructions and a direct word order are used:

"Russian Post reduces retail prices for a number of socially significant products at post offices throughout the country" (Russian Post, 2018).

"Gazprom boosts business performance through innovation" (PJSC Gazprom, 2018).

The name of the subject - the name of the company - occupies a strong position in the sentence:

"Sberbank is the oldest and largest bank in Russia".

"PAO "SIBUR Holding" is a gas processing and petrochemical company with a unique business model focused on the integrated work of two main segments - fuel and raw materials and petrochemicals".

In such lexical-syntactic models, the present tense verb in an active form creates a sense of reality of the corporation's goal, which, in the process of unfolding the discourse at the receptive phase, intensifies and forms positive implications for the recipient.

At the same time, in order to disguise the true producer of the action, the subject of the action can be expressed by indirect case or replaced by another subject.

"11/17/2013 A Boeing 737-500 aircraft operating U9 363 flight en route Moscow - Kazan had an accident during landing approach 19:25 (Moscow time)" (Tatarstan Airlines, 2013).

"This morning, on Arbatsko-Pokrovskaya metro line, the train came off at Park Pobedy - Slavyansky Boulevard section, which caused traffic to stop on the section between Kievskaya and Molodezhnaya stations (Moscow subway, 2014).

The pragmatic power of such information negatively affects the image of the corporation, therefore veiling tactics are chosen: a strong position in the proposal is occupied by the adverbial modifiers of place and time, the name of the person is absent and the inverted word order is used, and the position of the syntactic subjects is occupied by different names of the incident (plane crash, train collision, etc.).

7. Conclusion

The hypothesis that in the discursive practice of business informing the media it is preferable to use the passive voice and the reverse order of the main parts of the sentence, was confirmed by the study. The preferences in the choice of the grammatical voice and the order of the main members of the sentence found quantitative confirmation, interpreted from a structural and pragmatic point of view. A random sampling of the described constructions on the material of the latest business news allows us to talk about their relevance and prevalence in modern discursive business information practice.

The change in the direct word order in the passive voice constructions, preferred in business discursive media practices, in our opinion, is quite revealing. For a deeper study of this phenomenon, it seems promising to continue the study of the reasons for changing the order of words in such more dynamic areas as modern business discourse. Discursive practices such as business writing, consumer and corporate communication can be of the greatest interest here.

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