

ГЕРМАНСЬКІ МОВИ

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LANGUAGE MEANS AND STYLISTIC DEVICES OF EXPRESSING DOUBLESPEAK IN PUBLICIST DISCOURSE

The paper deals with a language phenomenon called doublespeak regarded as a powerful set of linguistic means and stylistic devices expressed in publicist discourse which reflects all the spheres of human life and activities including politics, law, business, marketing, etc.

Publicist style is used with the purpose of influencing the public by means of employing various linguistic techniques, logical argumentation and emotional appeal. Publicist style is the most critical one for doublespeak usage among other functional styles. The doublespeak technique is most often used there for the sake of persuasion. Since publicist discourse delivers certain vocabulary, expressions and the style needed to communicate, the peculiarities of the publicist functional style should be taken into consideration.

Regarding the issue of doublespeak from both theoretical and practical points of view the paper contains classification, definitions and examples with a focus on language means and stylistic devices as factors altering the perception of information.

Doublespeak, being a misleading persuasive technique, exerts influence on people and their opinions, manipulating and skillfully obfuscating them only pretending to communicate truthful messages. Actually it is aimed at blocking critical thinking due to the use of half-truths by giving fallacious arguments, providing veiled facts and factoids, thus, limiting and preventing further thought which illustrates the importance of information literacy.

Penetrating into all the spheres of social life and becoming a part of the general language, doublespeak has a great influence on social communication shaping the context in which it is used. At the same time it depends on the receiver who assigns the meaning of the message according to his/her individual experiences and purposes. Hence, different people can make different meanings of the same message which is the result of the required high level information literacy, critical thinking, analytical reasoning as well as responsibility needed for the corresponding lucidity and critical honesty.

Key words: publicist discourse, language means, stylistic devices, doublespeak, information literacy.

The problem being regarded: This paper deals with such language phenomenon as doublespeak or doubletalk. Doublespeak is a powerful set of linguistic means of exerting influence at people and their opinions, manipulating and skillfully obfuscating them. The analysis of language means and stylistic devices of expressing doublespeak in publicist discourse is mainly based on news reports, newspaper and magazine articles, speeches and advertisements, as it is essential for an individual in the modern world to be aware of the persuasive

technique named doublespeak, which is used in the language of politics, law, business and marketing, as well as in everyday life.

Research and publications review: According to William Lutz, the so-called guru of doublespeak, doublespeak is the language that only pretends to communicate a certain message while limiting and preventing further thought. The primary quality of doublespeak is incongruity which is meant to mislead, distort, deceive, inflate, circumvent and obfuscate [7]. Doublespeak transforms lies told by politicians into

strategic misinterpretations, being economical with truth, or terminological inexactitudes, and turns death into *negative patient care outcome, terminal living, mortality experience or maximum incapacitation* [8]. It is essential to turn our attention to the work of Charles Weingartner from the University of South Florida. He discusses the Transportation Theory of Communication; the traditional scheme transmitter-channel-receiver is taken as the basis. The theory, based on research in perception, claims that the receiver does not receive the meaning from the message, which is made of cues, but assigns it according to individual experiences and purposes. The meaning is in one's mind, so different people can make different meanings of the same message. Weingartner lists four types of information encoded in the messages which are to be perceived and interpreted by an individual. *Misinformation*, the first type, is simply telling lies. The second type, *disinformation*, is more interesting as it avoids sending the message to which any particular meaning at all can be assigned and in such a way it diverts from the pursuit of information. The third type, *anti-information* is designed to stop it (the pursuit) completely by concluding and in that way logically ending the quest for further information. The last type, *semi-information*, is based on giving true pieces of information concerning the matter but in such amounts and fashion that it prevents one from apprehending it fully. The author provides the example of the Soviet authorities saying that the Chernobyl resulted in a 'certain leak of radioactive substances' covering the fact that 'certain' means nearly fatal and will result in serious consequences for many future generations. Analyzing the upper mentioned data one may already notice that it is not necessary to tell lies in order to lie. Weingartner concludes that it appears extremely difficult to cope with those four types of information, so as with doublespeak, because to see the lies, the counterfeit and bogus one must know the truth, the authentic and the bona fide, accordingly [16]. The term doublespeak was coined in the 1950s. Very often it is attributed to George Orwell and his dystopian novel "1984". George Orwell was among the first scholars who attempted to make people be aware of highly political and manipulative language. He was a political writer, who focused on the problems of the time and strongly opposed totalitarianism [11; 12]. Orwell's most important work is the novel of political prophecy "1984" written in 1948, where among other ideas he emphasizes the importance of language in thought and, as a result, reality formation. In fact, Orwell did coin similar words like *Newspeak*, *Oldspeak* and *doublethink*,

which are closely connected with *doublespeak*. In his essay "Politics and the English Language" (1968) George Orwell discusses the problems of modern English and advocates for the return to plain English instead of that which intends to deceive and confuse. Even though the term doublespeak had not existed at that time yet. He gives examples of how *killing* may be called *pacification*, robbery and *expulsion of farmer's – transfer of population, imprisonment without trial in Arctic lumber camps and the execution following – elimination of unreliable elements*. The latest investigations of doublespeak consider the issues of the semantic context analysis [5] and the investigations in the context of multidisciplinary approach, psycholinguistics in particular, analyzing the problem of how the use of doublespeak serves for the empowerment of the self and disempowerment of the other [14].

The aim of the article: The aim of the paper is to identify the language means and stylistic devices of expressing doublespeak in publicist discourse based on classification, definitions and real-life examples from mass media. It also discusses how language means and stylistic devices can alter the perception of information.

The main body: In fact, doublespeak may be characterized as persuasive verbal propaganda. Publicist discourse as any other chosen discourse delivers the certain vocabulary, expressions and also the style needed to communicate. That is why it is quite appropriate to take into consideration the peculiarities of the publicist functional style. Publicist style is similar to journalistic one, which is a prose style used for reporting news in the media. It is divided into three subcategories: the oratorical sub-style, which is relatively new, essay sub-style and journalistic articles sub-style. Publicist style is used with the purpose of influencing the public by means of employing various linguistic techniques, logical argumentation and emotional appeal. Publicist style is the most critical one for doublespeak usage among other functional styles. The doublespeak technique is most often used there for the sake of persuasion.

The dictionary definition of the verb *to persuade* is to convince or cause somebody to do something/ stop doing something. From the linguistic point of view persuasion is a directive speech act, a complex one that is directed at imposing certain beliefs and values on the recipient and directing them to do the desired or evoke particular decisions. *To persuade* is a perlocutionary verb [4] According to Miroslaw Korolko persuasion is directed at three spheres of the recipient: reason, will and emotions [6]. The

act of persuasion is used in everyday life, in routine communication between people although it also brings enormous use to the fields of law, politics and commerce.

Language can be used to tell the truth; however, it can also be employed to misrepresent facts, or to persuade people to take a desired position towards them. Such use of language is intentional and conscious. The whole teams of speechwriters, linguists or other professionals very often work on crafting and mastering carefully chosen words and phrases in order to have the desired effect on the audience. The point is that there are very few absolutely neutral words. Usually every word possesses several meanings, may be ambiguous, and have a denotation and connotation. Even synonyms, which may be very close, are never exactly the same in their meanings owing to the fact that each synonym has its own shade and nuance. The use of syntax and certain grammatical patterns is important, too. The speech proves that by means of clever and sophisticated play on words and employing audience-flattering metaphors, connotations and framing one can attract attention and win the support of a certain audience as well as eliminate any further discussion.

Actually, doublespeak has a lot to do with irony, when language of one semantic environment is used in another and the discrepancy between real and declared aims appears. The majority of examples of doubletalk contain contextual irony. The context goes beyond the text; this is a social ironic context. For example, consider an Orwellian initiative "Healthy Forests" that was launched by Bush II in 2003. One would expect that it was to save forests, however, the reality is contrary; it actually allows commercial activity such as tree harvesting [15].

Euphemisms are presented by the scholars as one of the most essential stylistic devices of expressing doublespeak. The Oxford American Dictionary and Thesaurus (2003) defines euphemism as a mild or vague expression substituted for one thought to be too harsh or direct (e.g. *pass away* for *die*). It is also considered as a lexical stylistic device. Euphemisms are to make something sound softer, better, less distasteful, less offensive or politically correct. They often become metaphors and abandon their literal meaning. Not all euphemisms are doublespeak. For example, it may sound too harsh to say that somebody *died* or even worse and offensive to say *kicked the bucket*, which is already a dysphemism. Not to harm or offend anybody, euphemisms are used: *pass away*, *go to eternal sleep*, *rest in peace*, etc. In education, not to call students who do not succeed *stupid*, a term

slow learner is used. There are the so-called gentle euphemisms used to replace phrases like *going to the toilet* (*to use a restroom/bathroom/lady's room*), etc. On the contrary, euphemisms which are doublespeak are not generally understood and are designed in order to cover the truth or make the 'bad' truth sound better and tolerable. Euphemism as a concept upon which doublespeak is mostly based is linguistically created through the euphemism as a lexical stylistic device. William Lutz in his book "Doublespeak Defined" gives plenty of striking examples of doublespeak euphemisms. He provides as many as ninety-six ways of how to lay off workers (e.g., *correct a workforce imbalance*, *improve operations*, etc.) [8, p. 81–85].

Jargon is also used as a stylistic device of expressing doublespeak. It has two meanings in the Oxford American Dictionary and Thesaurus (2003): 1) words or expressions used by a particular group or profession (e.g., medical jargon), and 2) barbarous and debased language. If used in the particular professional or interest groups, where it is understood by everybody and sounds natural, it is welcome (for example, when doctors discuss some medical issues and use medical jargon). Though, if jargon is used outside some professional group to refer to unrelated people, who simply don't understand the language, it can be used stylistically, for example, to be used as doublespeak as it can be employed to make something sound more complex than it is or to confuse the addressee. Under the influence of context and the purpose of the author, jargon words or phrases gain additional connotations. Frank J. D'Angelo from Arizona University in an essay "Fiddle-Faddle, Flapdoodle, and Balderdash: Some Thoughts about Jargon" differentiates the following main types of jargon in context of doublespeak: businessese, legalese, medicalese, officialese and Pentagonese. He does not say that jargon is redundant in language but claims that one should not get too preoccupied with using it because then it does more harm than good [2].

The inflated language as a doublespeak stylistic device makes usual things sound unusual, sophisticated and important. This kind of high-flown, flattery wording is often used by advertisers to make their product or service sound special and better than the competitor's one, even though it is exactly the same. It is directed at catching the attention of a potential consumer and proving that it is exactly what they need. Of course, *genuine counterfeit diamonds* sound better than *fake diamonds* and are more likely to be sold. Sometimes, to dress up a message *barbarisms* are used. Barbarisms are words of foreign origin (Greek, Latin, French) used in language.

There are such foreign words which do not have their counterparts in English, but usually there exist Anglo-Saxon words which are clearly understood by an average audience and can replace those of the foreign origin. True, foreign words are often used to make speech sound more sophisticated and elegant, though, it is also true that they are often not understood or understood wrongly. This quality is employed by those who intend to deceive or confuse their audience. Here are some examples of foreign words and words with Greek or Latin prefixes and suffixes, the excessive use of which can be encountered in the speeches of politicians, sociological and scientific writings: *interdiction, ad hoc, abnegation, status quo, defoliation, cul de sac, intrazonal, utilize, escalation, extraneous, au natural, sub-aqueous*, etc.

Gobbledygook is a characteristic swallowing sound in the throat made by turkeys or the sound made by people when speaking while angry or excited. Also, it is pompous and unintelligible jargon [13]. *Gobbledygook* gains stylistic potential under the impact of the context. One of the most famous examples of *gobbledygook*, which demonstrates how language can merely pretend to communicate, is the statement of the President's Council of Economic Advisors Alan Greenspan made before Senate: "It is a tricky problem to find the particular calibration in timing that would be appropriate to stem the acceleration in risk premiums created by falling incomes without prematurely aborting the decline in the inflation-generated risk premiums" [3, p. 21]. To understand such a sentence one would have to take some time and it is not guaranteed that success in catching the gist would follow. *Gobbledygook* overwhelms the reader or the listener by bizarre words and long sentences. It uses a mix of lexical and syntactic expressive means and stylistic devices.

Carl Hausman in his book entitled 'Lies We Live By Defeating Double-Talk and Deception in Advertising, Politics, and the Media' demonstrating and analyzing how people sometimes may be deceived with words,

numbers and images, underlines the importance of information literacy i.e. 'the ability to cope with the avalanche of out-of-context and often misleading facts and factoids' [1, p. 14]. According to the author, information literacy is necessary for the members of the society since some institutions and businesses 'flagrantly and repeatedly mutate and mutilate the truth' by half-truths giving fallacious arguments, providing veiled facts, and using misleading graphics, as well as tortured statistics [1, p. 11].

Mirabela, Pop Anamaria in her article 'Doublespeak and Euphemisms in Business English' states that both doublespeak and euphemisms are cultural phenomena as well as linguistic concepts being deeply rooted in social life and having a great influence on social communications. She argues that 'doublespeak has become part of the general language, shaping the context in which it is used' [10, p. 127]. Besides, as the article 'Doublespeak' by Michael Naas reads, 'the question "Who speaks?" is never simple, <...> it can, in truth, never be definitively answered or settled, since every new context, every new reading or writing, requires that the question be asked anew: "Who speaks?"; "Who speaks to whom and of what?" [9, p. 317] which is caused by responsibility needed for the corresponding lucidity and critical honesty.

Conclusions and recommendations: The central theme of this research paper is the issue of doubletalk in publicist discourse. Nowadays, when mass media has such great influence on the public, it is essential to be aware of various dangers which are masked and hidden there. One of them is the language, which while pretending to communicate, obfuscates, misleads and often prevents any further critical analysis of a particular message. The extensive use of doublespeak in everyday life by those who, seeking power, tend to misrepresent the reality, manipulate the public by implying certain beliefs and presenting the facts in a convenient for them fashion leads to corruption of language and thus, corruption of thought.

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Байбакова І. М., Гасько О. Л. МОВНІ ЗАСОБИ ТА СТИЛІСТИЧНІ ПРИЙОМИ ДЕМАГОГІЇ У ПУБЛІЦИСТИЧНОМУ ДИСКУРСІ

Стаття присвячена демагогії, що розглядається як потужний набір мовних засобів і стилістичних прийомів, виражених у публіцистичному дискурсі, який відображає всі сфери життя та діяльності людини, включаючи політику, право, бізнес, маркетинг тощо. Публіцистичний стиль використовується з метою впливу на громадську думку за допомогою різноманітних мовних прийомів, логічної аргументації та емоційної привабливості. Серед інших функціональних стилів публіцистичний стиль є найбільш поширеним з точки зору використання демагогії, як засобу переконання. Публіцистичний дискурс відзначається притаманною йому лексикою, певними виразами та конкретним стилем, необхідними для спілкування.

Аналізуючи питання демагогії як з теоретичної, так і з практичної точок зору, стаття містить класифікацію, визначення та приклади мовних засобів і стилістичних прийомів як факторів, здатних змінювати сприйняття інформації. Демагогія є оманливою за своїм характером технікою переконання, котра впливає на людей та їхні думки, маніпулюючи ними та вміло обманюючи їх, лише вдаючи, що з її допомогою передаються правдиві повідомлення. Насправді, вона спрямована на блокування критичного мислення через використання напівправди шляхом хибної аргументації, надання завуальованих фактів і фактоїдів, обмежуючи, таким чином, аналітичний процес та запобігаючи баченню суті і розумінню інформації у всій її повноті, що ілюструє важливість інформаційної грамотності.

Проникаючи в усі сфери суспільного життя і ставши складовою мови, демагогія має великий вплив на соціальну комунікацію, формуючи контекст, у якому вона вживається. У той же час її сприйняття, розуміння і трактування залежать від людини, котра одержує інформацію і визначає значення повідомлення відповідно до свого особистого досвіду та цілей. Таким чином, різні люди можуть по-різному розуміти те саме повідомлення, що є результатом належного рівня інформаційної грамотності, критичного мислення, аналітичного міркування, а також відповідальності, необхідної для критичної чесності, чіткості бачення та ясності розуміння.

Ключові слова: публіцистичний дискурс, мовні засоби, стилістичні прийоми, демагогія, інформаційна грамотність.