

## МОВНІ ЗАСОБИ СТВОРЕННЯ ЕФЕКТИВ ОБ'ЄКТИВНОСТІ В НОВИНИХ СТАТТЯХ ПРО КОРОНАВІРУС

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*Стаття присвячена дослідженню засобів створення ефектів об'єктивності в новинних статтях про коронавірус. В роботі теоретично обґрунтовані мовні засоби, що репрезентують ефекти об'єктивності, які дозволили класифікувати їх, відповідно до рівня ефекту об'єктивності. В статті практично підтверджено широке застосування мовних засобів, що репрезентують навмисне створений ефект об'єктивності у 25 новинних статтях ВВС, які ми проаналізували. Ми довели, що ефект об'єктивності в новинних статтях про коронавірус досягається через використання певних мовних засобів відповідно до ступеня ефекту об'єктивності: високого, середнього та низького.*

*Це дослідження проілюструвало те, що новинні статті про коронавірус насправді є суб'єктивними, але їхня суб'єктивність замаскована за допомогою різноманітних лінгвістичних засобів, що створюють ефект об'єктивності. Серед них: подання статистики без посилання на будь-які джерела, кількісна характеристика з допомогою іменників множини, слів *more/less*, узагальнені обставини місця та часу, використання непрямої мови з униканням пригадування мовця або використання прямої мови - цитування.*

**Ключові слова:** ефект об'єктивності, мовні засоби, новинні статті, коронавірус, суб'єктивність.

## LINGUISTIC MEANS OF CREATING OBJECTIVITY EFFECTS IN NEWS ARTICLES ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS

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**Abstract.** *The article is devoted to the study of the means of creating objectivity effects in news articles about the coronavirus. The paper theoretically substantiates the linguistic means that represent the objectivity effects, which allowed to classify them according to the level of the objectivity effect.*

*The article practically confirms the widespread use of language tools that represent the deliberately created objectivity effect in the 25 BBC news articles we have analyzed.*

*We have shown that the objectivity effect in coronavirus news articles is achieved through the use of certain language tools according to the degree of objectivity effect: high, medium and low.*

*This study illustrates that news articles about the coronavirus are in fact subjective, but their subjectivity is masked by a variety of linguistic means that create the objectivity effect. These include the presentation of statistics without reference to any source, quantitative characterization using plural nouns, words more / less, generalized circumstances of place and time, the use of indirect speech to avoid mentioning the speaker or the use of direct speech - citation.*

**Keywords:** *objectivity effect, language tools, news articles, coronavirus, subjectivity.*

### **Introduction**

The news the society reads is about bursting issues. As the amount of people that are ill with coronavirus increases, the news articles about its widespread are getting more readership audience. It's a hot question how to cope with the disease. People are likely to get to know the symptoms, the rules how to behave when they or their close are ill. They need the information of the general situation. And these are the news that can provide people with data (Alba-Juez, 2017: 81).

In a quickly-developing society people wish to finish everything as fast as possible and at the same time they look for several resources. In order to shed light on it, we will analyze the news articles, their objectivity in particular. According to many people experiences there are some unreliable or reliable to some extent news. They are informative but may be subjective (Chaiuk, Dunaievskia, 2020: 184).

The insecurity feeling is increasing nowadays. Sociologists study the fear culture and provide the theoretical background on how the media presents the news connected with coronavirus outbreak and cause the audience's anxiety ((Alba-Juez, 2017: 82).

The **topicality** of the research consists in the fact of unveiling objectivity effects in news about coronavirus.

The course paper **aims** to study the linguistic means used to create objectivity effects in news about coronavirus.

### **Materials and research methods**

The material of the research is the Coronavirus news on English news site namely BBC [<https://www.bbc.com/news/>].

The aim and the tasks of the research paper presuppose the application of the following general **scientific methods**: the method of random sampling so as to single out constructions denoting effect of objectivity; quantitative method in order to count the most frequently used constructions. The specific **linguistic methods** are as follows: definitional approach for defining terms relevant to the topic; classification method for dividing constructions into different groups; the method of generalization for formulation of names of groups of constructions and for making conclusions.

Numerous examples to each of three levels of objectivity: low, middle and the high one have been found on BBC website. The low objectivity level falls into 4 subgroups: denoting lack of source, possibilities, imprecise place or time and considerations.

The next large group is the middle objectivity effect level. There belong examples of linguistic means found in the analyzed articles that can impress readers more than those from the first group and make them think of information given in the news as of the objective one. Here the speaker is omitted. It can be either complete or partial omission.

Speaking about complete omission of the speaker, in the news there are names of countries, organizations or collaborative words denoting groups of people are used instead of concrete ones.

In partial omission the speaker's name is given without his position at work, or a company they work for in some news items while in the others there are only their positions and no names.

The last and the largest is the group of linguistic means denoting a high objectivity effect level. It is created by the wide usage of quotes. They consist of real words the speakers had previously said and normally do not have any impurities. That allows the readership to acquire the essence of the given words without any obstruction. Moreover, respected and famous writers won't risk their positions at work and change words using quotes. Though quotes are belonging to the high level of objectivity, they are subjective in their nature as well. Quotations are used to persuade the reader to rely on the given information, but it happens very often that the words are provided out of context even with the contrary meaning as a consequence.

Many news writers publish news describing the situation with Covid-19 and employ different linguistic means to create the objectivity effect.

### **Scientific basis**

The definition of the news text includes two aspects: news text is about something new and it is related to the readers' lives. Taking into account both aspects the conclusion is that the news text is a text containing news about recent events from life that is familiar, required and needed for the readers. There is a huge variation of news texts' topics: about health, about officials, about war conflicts etc. They may be about the most specific things like a new version of iPhone and more general like the level of poverty in the country. They may be connected with a particular person or with the society overall (Palczewski, 2018).

The criteria for the news item are the following: originality, uniqueness, interest or significance, and writing about people. News texts are used to inform readers about events of the day which are considered newsworthy or important (Niblock, 2005: 74).

The common suggestion is that there must be not more than 20 words in a sentence. The recommendation is that each sentence must be limited to no more than three separate ideas (Palczewski, 2018).

As for the sentence structure it's needed to use active voice in news, so readers can remember them. A subordinate clause is omitted to start a sentence with.

Of course, lively language is more preferred than clichés as the language of a reader is more important than the author's. However, if it's impossible to avoid using a new word, it must be followed immediately with an explanation (Набок А. І).

Moreover, there exist such manipulations of creating an effect of objectivity as using general nouns instead of real people, generalized adjectives, absence of quotation, no proof or a real resource of information. If above-mentioned peculiarities of English news texts are kept, then the news draw audience's attention and make them interesting and easy for reading (Іоркова, 2020).

### **Research results**

In news texts on the BBC site we have found various linguistic means creating objectivity effect. All of them fall into three large groups denoting: a low objectivity level (25 %), a middle objectivity level (19 %) and a high objectivity level (56 %). Linguistic means denoting statistics lacking a source. They take the central position in describing low

objectivity level in news about coronavirus as they are numerous. Taking into account that fact that numbers and per cent can make people trust the author, this approach is prevailing.

It is commonly used to give statistic data of the amount of the dead people due to coronavirus in nowadays news. Usually it is presented with the help of numbers as graphical signs, or nouns “numbers”, “dozens”, “hundreds” and even the word “confirmed” is used when there is no reference to the confirmative source. Also scalar are applies such as: fewer, less, more and over.

A bright example of the statistic provided with no further reference to the source of it is: *One in 1000 of the entire UK population has already died after being infected with coronavirus during the pandemic* (12 <Hopefully next year we'll be living a normal life>). Such statistic is used preferably at the beginning of the articles, as it causes an interest for reading them.

The next widespread statistics is about the number of people who are tested and found ill. As we can see in a further example, this statistic is not confirmed in some news as well. *A surgeon at Merseyside hospital has tested positive for coronavirus* (5 <Aintree hospital surgeon tests positive>). *A second member of staff at a Merseyside hospital has tested positive for coronavirus, after a surgeon was also diagnosed* (9). Both presented examples are about the same hospital and the amount of ill staff. There is no citation of the resource in both of them. The second instance is taken only two days later after the first item is published. It remains unclear whether the author intentionally does not prove the words or it is a coincidence.

Readers have a strong interest to the question of vaccination. So, the statistic of the amount of vaccinated people is used in many news articles as a trigger. It is written with the help of numbers and they are rounded to the numbers that are easy to remember as “a million”, “a hundred”, “a thousand” etc.

While analyzing the way the journalists are minded to evoke strong emotions in their readers, we found such a kind of writing that makes the readers feel afraid. Authors write about something terrible and as they have no background, they use words as “a further possibility”, “could be”, “might also be”, “is likely to be”, or “it could mean”. So, there are two subgroups according to the words used: using modals – 18 examples (16,6%) and the word “possibility” – 6 examples (5, 6%).

Possible meaning of a developing situation is in the next case: *Practically, it could mean an end to going to the pub or to the restaurants for the duration of the circuit breaker* (McCormac). Here we can see an author's opinion since there is not any official claim corresponding to this.

There is a range of news items describing some issues that are hot among the audience. Still, not having enough information about the events, the texts are published with unclear adverbials modifiers of place as the following: “across”, “during the evening”, “in (a country name)”, or “throughout ...”. It takes 2,7 % (7 examples) out of this group.

These so-called considerations may touch means of treatment: *There are some drugs that have truly brutal consequences on the body, but are still approved because they are considered worth the risk* (Gallagher). It's unclear who considers that treatment worth the risk of somebody's death actually, and why somebody must agree with this.

In the represented speech there is an information like “he/she said that”. If it is a reliable news resource, there is at least briefly said who is the speaker. His position at work, where he works and his name are preferable.

There are two subgroups. The first is complete omission of the speaker – 36 examples (55,4%), and the second one is partial – 29 examples (44,6 %). The following substitutes belong to the first subgroup (they are applied instead of the required as): the name of the country- 1 example (0,4 %), the collective name or organizations – 17 examples (26%), and generalized nouns denoting some groups of people with no personalization – 19 examples (29 %).

The name of the country creates an objectivity effect. It is given as though somebody is saying it. But who is not clear for a thoughtful reader: *The United Arab Emirates is the first country to rate a front-running Chinese vaccine for Covid-19, saying it was 86% effective in a phase-three trial* (3 <China jab 86 % effective, UAE says>). It is a vivid example of how the name of a country is used instead of a real speaker.

In the news there can be some generalizations or collaborative names used. *Scientists advising the UK government say spending six seconds at a distance of 1m from someone is the same as spending one minute at a distance of 2m* (4 <1 m distancing is possible in NI from Monday>). It is impossible to get what scientists are there in that piece of, nothing about their nationality, a field of science, organization they are working for etc. is said. *Regulators have advised that anyone with a history of significant allergic reactions should not have the Pfizer/BioNTech jab* (Connolly). Unknown from the context regulators decided who should not have the vaccine.

There exist such sayings with the person mentioned when only some part of usually provided information is presented. In some cases, there are only names, that may be not familiar to an average reader – 8 examples (12,3%), or only profession titles with no name – 21 examples (32,3 %).

The position without name can mislead as in the example below. In this case when several nations are mentioned it is not directly that this person belongs to the UK: *The prime minister has told leaders of the devolved nations that he is committed to a UK-wide approach to tackling coronavirus "even if different parts of the UK begin to move at slightly different speeds", Downing Street said* (7 <Urges 'caution' on lockdown easing>). For the UK's readers it may sound normal as they know their ministers as supposed. However, the representatives of the other countries may need more information to accept this as the objective one.

Firsthand interviews are very often observed in journalism. News write a person's real name and then quote them directly. As most reputable journalists can't risk their job by fabricating a quote, those quotes are mostly reliable. Outlets generally only withhold names if identifying a person would endanger them.

To conclude, quotes seem to be the most reliable source of information used by journalists. They directly show what a definite person has said. And it seems to have no room for a personal attitude of the author. Though, the quotes that are taken out of context to prove the necessary point of view as well not fully objective.

### **Conclusions**

Today we have a large selection of news texts dedicated to coronavirus topics. However, they only seem to be objective. They are subjective indeed though different linguistic means are used to create the objectivity effect.

Such criteria for the news item as originality, uniqueness, interest or significance are applied to news texts. They are used to inform readers about events of the day that are newsworthy or important. Above-mentioned information ensures that a great choice of linguistic means help journalists to cultivate a fear culture, share fake news and create objectivity effect.

Perspectives of further investigation of the given topic consists in the necessity of profound studying of the other linguistic means of creating objectivity effect in news about coronavirus that are not included in this paper due to the limit of volume and in studying other spheres of creating objectivity effect in English news texts on other topics.

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