

# Nationally Orientated Communication as the Basic Function of Professional Activity in English Mass Media<sup>\*</sup>

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**Abstract.** This article aims to disclose the communicative essence of English media discourse and the specificity of the information transmitted, which is determined by both interrelated parties (i.e. media sources and readers) involved in this socially valid communicative process. English media discourse is examined in the British and American variants.

The three parts of media communication comprising the author, the addressee, and the information itself are actualized in media discourse articles in a very peculiar form of their interconnection. The media orientation towards the addressee, i.e. the British and American public, leads to the articles being not only linguistically adapted, but also thematically focused on information which is habitual and even desirable for each of the said communities. The author often acts as a moderator who stays, figuratively speaking, behind the scenes, and merely regulates or verbalizes the information communicated by various representatives of the nations regarded as his or her full-fledged co-authors. The article also considers the gender aspect of media communications where male and female issues bear their respective linguistic and thematic features. The emotional colouring of the transmitted information turns out to be another specific point of the English media discourse that appeals to the British and American public through the use of certain linguistic means. The authors conclude that from the national identity-related perspective English media communication may be characterized as an information field that incorporates issues of importance for both nations, renders them with the help of nationally adapted wording, and thus even forms a kind of “energy space.”

**Keywords:** communication, mass media discourse, information, nation, identity, gender, emotional colouring

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The popularity and prevalence of media discourse as the main channel of communication today makes it all the more relevant to study it from the standpoint of an independent communicative phenomenon that has its own communicative features and patterns. The term “communication” is used in a wide variety of works, and its meaning can vary wildly, with no definitive interpretation being offered. If we were to extract a common element from all linguistic definitions of communication, then we could say that, in its most abbreviated form, communication can be understood as the exchange of information, thoughts, data, etc.

The necessary components of such information communication are the author, the addressee and the information itself. There are, of course, many more components to communication, but let us dwell on this short list for now. It is far more important to evaluate communication in the modern world. As we know, the ongoing global transformation of industrial society into an information and communication society is accompanied not only by the penetration of communication into all spheres of life and the emergence and development of qualitatively new types of communicative structures and processes, but also by a deep rethinking of the communicative nature of social reality, the changes taking place in the social and communicative sphere, and the place and role of communication in the development of society (Vasilik, 2004: 4). Information and communication can even be combined into a single product and be guided by the daily life of people in solving their problems (Nordin, 2022: 1). The penetration of communication into all spheres of life has also affected the role of media communication in creating risks for society, when anyone with a social media account can share information, be it valuable or downright wrong (Genereux, 2021: 1178).

Modern linguistic works on information note that the main (informational) function of communication is to transmit information. At the same time, the message can be addressed to no one particular, not focused on any specific person. In this sense, asymmetric communication is possible (Morozova, Bazyleva, 2014: 206). When describing the process of communication, we inevitably bump into its synonym – “conversation.” The opinion of a psychologist may prove useful here. According to B. Parygin, despite the fact that communication between people occurs through the exchange of information, understood in the broadest sense, communication serves another function that does not fit into the framework of the utilitarian exchange of interpersonal (business) information, and that is as a deep psychological connection of the subjects of a conversation that consists in the transfer of elements of uniqueness in the mental state and structure of the personal potential of those involved in communication. This is more than simply informational communication. It is, according to Parygin’s definition, an “energy-informational” field (Parygin, 1999: 211).

What is communication in media discourse?

Media discourse has become an almost all-encompassing phenomenon and, in general, it can be defined as the totality of all processes of speech activity in the media, including their coordination. All information is treated as equal, whether it is positive or negative, provided by journalists or ordinary people, and the channels through

which it is distributed are ignored (de Vreese, 2021: 216). We thus have to admit that media discourse is a set of processes and products of speech activity in mass communication in all the richness and complexity of their interaction (Gribovod, 2013: 118). As mentioned above, media discourse today has effectively turned into an “energy-informational” field.

This article aims to disclose the communicative essence of English media discourse and the specificity of transmitted information, which is determined by the communicating parties involved in this socially valid communicative process. It is in this format that the phenomenon known as national identity, relevant in today’s world, reveals itself, and the national becomes the addressee of media discourse (Castells, 2009; Epstein, 2011). It has been stated on numerous occasions that identity is constructed on the basis of a situationally determined communicative experience (Bamberg et al, 2011). In other words, the idea that there is a “true self” behind discourse is nothing more than the result of discursive practices (Benwell, Stokoe, 2006). According to the discursive approach to identity, the product of interaction is not only the Self as an individual, but the entire system of its interactions (Melnikova, 2014: 59–60).

Our research found that achieving the goal depended on the use of appropriate methods: descriptive and comparative methods, discursive analysis, definitional and contextual analysis.

### **The Informational Structure of English Language Internet Sources**

Research into the communicative nature of media discourse should, first of all, proceed from the fact that it is not fictional characters that appear in media discourse, but real people who in one form or another, report about themselves and other important facts of our time, which is to say that they communicate. This primarily concerns printed materials, including online versions of newspapers, which can qualify as internet sources. And these are precisely the sources we will be looking at in this paper. More specifically, we will wade through the vast information space of a number of British and American newspapers (The Independent, The Guardian, The Washington Post, and The New York Times) and concentrate on some of their sections – those which clearly indicate the structure of this type of internet source. Looking the UK newspapers, specifically The Independent, we see such sections as News, Independent TV, Climate, Sport, Voices, Culture, Premium, Indy/Life, IndyBest, Indy1000, My Independent, Vouchers, Compare and Opinions. The American newspapers are even more varied in their sections: Politics, Opinions, Investigations, Tech, World, Sports, Arts and Entertainment, Business, Climate and Environment, Coronavirus, Education, Food, Health, History, Immigration, Lifestyle, Media, Outlook, Religion, Science, Weather, Photography, etc.

The media discourse we see in these newspapers is differentiated, structured and focused on the various aspects of the lives of the British and Americans as nations. How is communication organized here in the context of the details noted above and

the three components of communication we identified – author, addressee and information as such? At first glance, it is not difficult to determine who the author is. It is either the author of the article (which is indicated more frequently in American publications), or the editor of the newspaper. The addressee can only be determined by the nature of the published information, which, on the one hand, indicates symmetric communication, and, on the other hand, represents a rethinking of the communicative nature of social reality, modern changes in the communicative sphere, and the place and role of communication in the development of society (Vasilik, 2004: 4). There is, however, another function of communication that does not fit into the framework of the utilitarian exchange of impersonal (business) information and testifies to a deep psychological connection between the subjects of communication (Parygin, 1999: 63).

It is precisely this perspective – that is, taking the deep psychological connection of the subjects of communication into account – that is most promising when considering the type of communication that appears in English-language media discourse, which can already be qualified as the communicative activity of the author and the addressee. With the exception of political news, the information that appears in these publications almost exclusively concerns the lives of Brits and Americans, revealing them to be addressees united by a deep psychological connection. In this respect, we can claim that the national identity of Brits and Americans is reflected through media discourse. The addressee and the published information thus form a single whole, which suggest that the information delivered is programmed specifically for the nation in question.

This is backed up by the fact that there are very few mentions in the English-language media of other nationalities, even in news reports. Yet there is a staggering lexical diversity in the way Brits refer to themselves, which perhaps contributes to the strengthening of national self-knowledge. One cannot help but notice the variety of names British people have for themselves. We identified the following lexical units used to denote British nationality:

**“British people”** (Almost half of British people want a second referendum on Brexit, a new poll has found<sup>1</sup>);

**“The British”** – Brexit hasn’t materially altered their view of Britain and the British<sup>2</sup>;

**“Britons”** – Germany was the most the popular member state for Britons seeking citizenship<sup>3</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> Kentish B. Almost half of British people want a second referendum on Brexit, new poll finds. *The Independent*. 2018. 23 June. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/second-brexit-referendum-polling-eu-withdrawal-vote-leave-remain-a8413461.html> (accessed: 03.10.2020).

<sup>2</sup> Telegraph Travel. Bemused, dismayed and inspired: What the world thinks about Brexit – the expats; view. *The Telegraph*. 2019. 05 September. URL: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/comment/what-rest-of-world-thinks-about-brexit/> (accessed: 03.10.2020).

<sup>3</sup> Cowburn A. Surge in British people obtaining EU citizenship since referendum, new data reveals. *The Independent*. 2018. 30 Saturday. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/british-people-obtaining-eu-citizenship-passports-live-abroad-study-a8424276.html> (accessed: 03.10.2020).

**“Brits”** – This seemingly obvious fact is clear as day to Europe, but still appears to escape millions of Brits<sup>4</sup>.

This multiplicity of names points to the fact that Brits feel themselves to be special somehow, especially in opposition to other nations that use only one name to refer to themselves.

The addressees of English-language media discourse are characterized by interviewees being participants in the creation of the message, practically as an author reporting the most basic information. This is often accompanied by the name of the person (typically female) assessing the situation being reported on from his or her position as a representative of the British nation:

Sarah Everard: what's being done to help women feel safer on the streets?<sup>5</sup>.

Sophie Walker, Chief Executive of YWT, said: “Young women across the UK are pushed into doing jobs that society values and pays less; they are pushed into providing low paid and unpaid care work”<sup>6</sup>.

This type of headline creation is found exclusively in media discourse.

### **National Variability in English Language Media Discourse as a Feature of its Informational Structure**

There are noticeable variations in British and American English-language media discourse. These differences are immediately evident in the headings of individual articles. Headlines are of particular interest as a type of small-format text, and such texts are themselves interesting because their purpose is to express as much content as possible with as few words as possible (Vedeneva et al., 2018; Cherkunova, 2019). Interestingly, even headlines reflect the national specifics of media discourse.

Judging by the headlines of British newspapers, we can conclude that it is very important for the British to indicate the source of information, something that you rarely find in American publications.

Most Britons still trust AstraZeneca vaccine, YouGov poll shows<sup>7</sup>.

Only 18 per cent of Britons think Brexit is going well, poll finds<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> ‘UK is weaker than she thinks’: Expert says Britain is “Embarrassing itself” with Brexit. *The Express*. 2018. 10 October. URL: <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1029415/Brexit-news-UK-EU-negotiations-Germany-Marcel-Dirus-no-deal-latest> (accessed: 03.10.2020).

<sup>5</sup> Taylor W. Sarah Everard: What's being done to help women feel safer on the streets? *The Independent*. 2021. 01 October. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/sarah-everard-women-street-safety-b1930541.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>6</sup> Gallagher S. A third of young women in the UK struggle to make ends meet, says study. *The Independent*. 2019. 03 December. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/women/debt-money-income-women-uk-survey-men-job-finance-a9230906.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>7</sup> Muzaffar M. Most Britons still trust AstraZeneca vaccine, YouGov poll shows. *The Independent*. 2021. 09 April. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/astrazeneca-covid-uk-yougov-poll-b1828895.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>8</sup> Sullivan R. Only 18 per cent of Britons think Brexit is going well, poll finds. *The Independent*. 2021. 26 November. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/politics/brexit-uk-latest-yougov-poll-b1965140.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

Millions of Brits feel ‘overwhelmed’ by life pressures, study finds<sup>9</sup>.

Americans are eager for air travel this holiday season, but is the system ready for them?<sup>10</sup>

Are Americans starting to embrace one-earner households again?<sup>11</sup>.

Why are Americans acting like this?<sup>12</sup>.

American articles tend to be more emotional, which is why their authors make more frequent use of interrogative sentences in headlines. As for British media texts, declarative sentences with the word “why” were noted as part of headlines: Why the Brits should stick to honouring British artists<sup>13</sup>.

These kinds of linguistic moments regarding the information being transmitted always add something special, familiar even, to the text, perhaps even something expected for a particular nation. The same is accomplished by mentioning the British nation in British news reports, which happens a lot. At the same time, it is important to note that, in terms of subject matter, media articles cover a wide range of topics, such as:

religious beliefs: More than half of the British public (53 per cent) say they are not at all religious – a figure that has increased by five percentage points since 2015<sup>14</sup>,

obtaining European citizenship: A surge has been recorded in the number of British people obtaining the nationality of another EU member state since the referendum<sup>15</sup>,

the issue of racial prejudice: One in four British people admit to being racially prejudiced<sup>16</sup>, etc.

<sup>9</sup> Bailey G. Millions of Brits feel ‘overwhelmed’ by life pressures, study finds. *The Independent*. 2018. 19 January. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/stress-work-pressures-busy-social-calenders-financial-worries-survey-a8167446.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>10</sup> Aratani L., Duncan I. Americans are eager for air travel this holiday season, but is the system ready for them? *The Washington Post*. 2021. 19 November. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/transportation/2021/11/19/thanksgiving-holiday-air-travel/> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>11</sup> Olsen H. Are Americans starting to embrace one-earner households again? *The Washington Post*. 2021. 12 November. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/11/12/are-americans-starting-embrace-one-earner-households-again/> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>12</sup> Telnaes A. Why are Americans acting like this? *The Washington Post*. 2021. 25 October. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/10/25/why-are-americans-acting-like-this/> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>13</sup> Lister D. Why the Brits should stick to honouring British artists. *The Independent*. 2019. 01 March. URL: [https://www.independent.co.uk/news/long\\_reads/brits-2019-awards-outstanding-achievement-in-music-sony-pink-american-artists-a8784436.html](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/long_reads/brits-2019-awards-outstanding-achievement-in-music-sony-pink-american-artists-a8784436.html) (accessed: 10.02.2020).

<sup>14</sup> Bulman M. Record number of British people say they have no religion. *The Independent*. 2017. 04 September. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/british-people-atheist-no-religion-uk-christianity-islam-sikism-judaism-jewish-muslims-a7928896.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>15</sup> Cowburn A. Surge in British people obtaining EU citizenship since referendum, new data reveals. *The Independent*. 2018. 30 June. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/british-people-obtaining-eu-citizenship-passports-live-abroad-study-a8424276.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>16</sup> Dearen L. One in four British people admit to being racially prejudiced. *The Independent*. 2017. 29 September. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/british-people-admit-racially-prejudiced-white-black-asian-muslims-brexit-more-leave-voters-remain-survey-a7973751.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).



These are just some of the issues that are on the agenda, but they highlight the fact that the nation is very much preoccupied with the interests of Great Britain and its citizens.

An analysis of articles published in American magazines reveals that they do not focus on a wide range of nationalities. News reports are divided into categories: Africa, Americas, Australia, Canada, Europe and the Middle East. British newspapers have similar sections: Europe, the Middle East, the United States, Africa, Asia, and Australasia. It is obvious that American articles are less focused on other nationalities in their content, and use the names of other nationalities far less frequently.

First of all, newspapers deal with the most pressing issues of public life. A wide range of topics is centred on the nation, the totality of citizens of the state. Commenting on the verbal characteristics of published materials, we should note that, on the whole, there is a tendency to use the lexeme “American” as a way of self-identification, and the term “American people” is not popular.

Articles often state the opinion of citizens on a given issue or situation in the country: More than twice as many Americans approve as disapprove of special counsel Robert S. Mueller III’s efforts, though people’s views are shaped by their politics<sup>17</sup>.

The “Lifestyle” section, which covers a wide variety of facts and events and deals with everyday issues, is of particular interest. The section frequently publishes the results of nationwide surveys and studies, which give us information of a very different nature about the British people. Food and nutrition is a favourite topic among Brits, with countless articles being published: Food is becoming a chore for many Brits who are getting bored with lunch as they eat out of necessity than pleasure<sup>18</sup>. Many articles are accompanied by a wide variety of statistics. One particularly notable piece gives data on the amount of pizza the average Brit eats: The average Brit manages to chomp their way through 731 pizzas in their lifetime<sup>19</sup>. Another provides an analysis of British food preferences: It shows Brits are broadening their culinary horizons<sup>20</sup>.

Another topic that is of great interest to Brits is the amount of sleep they get per night, with one article comparing average sleep times today compared to 40 years ago: However, according to recent research, Brits are actually sleeping more now than they

<sup>17</sup> Guskin E., Zapotsky M. Post-ABC poll: Most Americans approve of Trump-Russia probe, and nearly half think Trump committed a crime. *The Washington Post*. 2017. 02 November. URL: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/post-abc-poll-most-americans-approve-of-trump-russia-probe-and-nearly-half-think-trump-committed-a-crime/2017/11/02/9ccb3ccc-bfd6-11e7-97d9-bdab5a0ab381\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/post-abc-poll-most-americans-approve-of-trump-russia-probe-and-nearly-half-think-trump-committed-a-crime/2017/11/02/9ccb3ccc-bfd6-11e7-97d9-bdab5a0ab381_story.html) (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>18</sup> Peat J. One in three Brits face ‘deja-food’ on a daily basis. *The Independent*. 2018. 21 September. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/one-in-three-brits-food-envy-a8547201.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>19</sup> Petter O. How many pizzas the average Brit eats in their lifetime, according to new study. *The Independent*. 2018. 24 August. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/pizzas-uk-average-eat-lifetime-favourite-toppings-britain-pepperoni-cheese-tomato-a8504316.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>20</sup> Wills K. Thanksgiving: the latest US tradition to take root in UK, as one in six celebrate ‘Brits-givig’. *The Independent*. 2015. 25 November. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/features/thanksgiving-is-the-latest-us-tradition-to-take-root-in-the-uk-as-one-in-six-of-us-celebrate-britsgiving-a6749046.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

did four decades ago<sup>21</sup>. Money and spending habits are also important topics for British people: Brits are planning to cut corners with pre-chopped vegetables, instant gravy and frozen roast potatoes<sup>22</sup>.

The range of issues covered in America is also quite extensive. The difference is that articles focus exclusively on issues that affect the United States, in particular such questions as:

Health: Americans should limit use of daily aspirin meant to prevent heart attack or stroke<sup>23</sup>;

Raising children: Most Americans still think spanking is fine. It's not<sup>24</sup>;

Happiness: Why would Americans be looking across the Atlantic to find prescriptions for happiness?<sup>25</sup>, and many more.

A closer reading of articles in the English-language media discourse reveals that authors do not always use the names of nations (Britons, Americans, etc.) as collective designations, but write "men" and "women" instead. The nationality of the person or people becomes obvious from the content of the article. But something else is important here – the fact that authors subconsciously divide their nation along gender lines.

Instances where the expression "men and women" appears in articles of media discourse are extremely diverse. Sometimes the emphasis is on gender, and sometimes it is on biological sex, meaning the physiology of men and women, for example:

Men and women should follow different diet rules, experts reveal<sup>26</sup>.

Why men and women feel pain differently<sup>27</sup>.

Women are twice as likely as men to self-harm<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> Barr S. the reason why Brits are sleeping more now than they did in the 1970s. *The Independent*. 2018. 16 September. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/brits-sleep-1970s-bed-night-deprivation-work-health-a8539931.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>22</sup> Brimble L. Nearly half of Brits will use shortcuts to make Christmas dinner this year. *The Independent*. 2020. 25 November. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/christmas/christmas-brits-dinner-shortcuts-b1761750.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>23</sup> Hurley B. Americans should limit use of aspirin to prevent heart attacks or stroke, medical panel rules. *The Independent*. 2021. 12 October. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/daily-aspirin-heart-attack-stroke-b1937035.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>24</sup> Gillespie C. Most Americans still think spanking is fine. It's not. *The Washington Post*. 2018. 07 December. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2018/12/07/most-americans-still-think-spanking-is-fine-its-not/> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>25</sup> McDonough M. Americans are obsessed with hygge. Is one of this international lifestyle trends next? *The Washington Post*. 2018. 31 May. URL: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/home/what-will-be-the-next-hygge-five-international-lifestyle-trends-that-may-be-the-next-big-fad/2018/05/29/8227a612-6076-11e8-b2b8-08a538d9dbd6\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/home/what-will-be-the-next-hygge-five-international-lifestyle-trends-that-may-be-the-next-big-fad/2018/05/29/8227a612-6076-11e8-b2b8-08a538d9dbd6_story.html) (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>26</sup> Timmins B. Men and women should follow different diet rules. Experts reveal. *The Independent*. 2017. 13 June. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/men-women-diet-different-rules-experts-research-nutrition-breakfast-pasta-mussels-cheese-a7787621.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>27</sup> Warraich H.J. Why men and women feel pain differently. *The Washington Post*. 2021. 15 May. URL: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/women-and-pain/2021/05/14/98cb4116-9d55-11eb-9d05-ae06f4529ece\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/women-and-pain/2021/05/14/98cb4116-9d55-11eb-9d05-ae06f4529ece_story.html) (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>28</sup> Hosie R. Women are twice as likely as men to self-harm. *The Independent*. 2018. 01 November. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/selfharm-young-adults-women-anxiety-eating-disorders-addiction-a8569811.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).



Will Covid-19 lead to men and women splitting care work more evenly?<sup>29</sup>.

Articles on gender divisions do appear, sometimes even with the use of the lexeme "gender." For example:

However, there are actually gender divisions, and even with the use of the lexeme gender, for example,

Gender Inequality: What happened when a man and woman switched names at work for a week<sup>30</sup>.

We cannot ignore the fact here that the author of the article, as a man or a woman (no other options are given) will, one way or another, present the information in the article from the standpoint of his or her (or their) gender role. During their lives, people perform several social roles simultaneously, and their speech, as an indicator and means of affirming these roles, depend on the situation. We should also stress that the author must, in accordance with the style guidelines, adopt a neutral manner of presentation, observe the rules of political correctness, avoid the use of emotionally charged words and expressions, and try to avoid openly giving his or her own opinion. However, in many cases, the author's opinion, his or her evaluation of the subject matter, is implicit in the article. In the author's speech, a "nation" is depicted as a community consisting of men and women, the components of which differ only in the number of votes on a given issue.

60 % of women struggle to articulate their thoughts and ideas during interviews, poll claims<sup>31</sup>.

Survey results released today found six in 10 women struggle to articulate their thoughts and ideas during interviews<sup>32</sup>.

Rapidly changing social conditions have an impact on people's lives, and it is media discourse that reflects these transformations in male and female behavioural stereotypes. The modern woman wants to try her hand in a different gender role, to be equal with men in every respect. This is why British women place such importance on issues of gender equality. This can be seen in the following statement: Despite progress in closing the equality gap, 91% of men and 86% of women hold at least one bias against women in relation to politics, economics, education, violence or reproductive rights<sup>33</sup>. Thus, despite the gender stereotypes that have developed over the course of

<sup>29</sup> Keyes S. Will COVID-19 lead to men and women splitting care work more evenly? *The Washington Post*. 2020. 12 May. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/05/12/will-covid-19-lead-men-women-splitting-care-work-more-evenly/> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>30</sup> Rodionova Z. Gender Inequality: What happened when a man and woman switched names at work for a week. *The Independent*. 2017. 10 March. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/gender-inequality-man-woman-switch-names-week-martin-schneider-nicky-knacks-pay-gap-a7622201.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>31</sup> Hall A. 60% of women struggle to articulate their thoughts and ideas during interviews, poll claims. *The Independent*. 2018. 08 September. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-women-interviews-struggle-articulate-thoughts-ideas-poll-national-literacy-trust-a8527131.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ford L. Nine out of 10 people found to be biased against women. *The Guardian*. 2020. 05 March. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/mar/05/nine-out-of-10-people-found-to-be-biased-against-women> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

thousands of years about the role and place of women, female images are being masculinized, and this is a direct consequence of the growth of feminism in society today. Media discourse is the first to react to such changes.

Gender differences between Americans and Brits are directly related to sociopolitical phenomena, the prism through which they are expressed. In the United States, this feature often turns out to be skin colour, and we frequently see such headlines as: Boston now has an Asian American woman as mayor. Why are so few women of color in elected office?<sup>34</sup>. The phrase I'm black is quite popular in American media discourse, de facto turning into a kind of cliché used by men and women in roughly equal measure.

Such clichés can also be found in newspaper and magazine articles: Melanie Charles knows the impact Black women have had on jazz<sup>35</sup>.

Black women are proving their strength by giving themselves permission to say no<sup>36</sup>.

What does reality TV owe Black women?<sup>37</sup>.

Americans are particularly sensitive about the issue of women in politics: More women are tuning out politics – a danger sign for Democrats in Virginia and beyond<sup>38</sup>.

Yes, Congress should make women eligible for the draft; How Trump mobilized women – including me<sup>39</sup>.

This kind of attention to women's issues in politics also testifies to the undoubted awareness of the speaker (in this case, the author) of the role of women in the structure of the nation as a factor of identification.

At the same time, Americans point to the negative role that society plays for women:

Our economy was designed to fail women – and it does<sup>40</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> Phillips C.D. Boston now has an Asian American woman as mayor. Why are so few women of color in elected office? *The Washington Post*. 2021. 23 November. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/11/23/boston-mayor-women-color/> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>35</sup> Effinger S.J. Melanie Charles knows the impact Black women have had on jazz. *The Washington Post*. 2021. 12 November. URL: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/music/melanie-charles-black-women-jazz/2021/11/10/ad8586a-4179-11ec-a3aa-0255edc02eb7\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/music/melanie-charles-black-women-jazz/2021/11/10/ad8586a-4179-11ec-a3aa-0255edc02eb7_story.html) (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>36</sup> Milloy C. Black women are proving their strength by giving themselves permission to say no. *The Washington Post*. 2021. 02 November. URL: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/strong-black-women-myth/2021/11/02/d07dce20-3be9-11ec-bfad-8283439871ec\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/strong-black-women-myth/2021/11/02/d07dce20-3be9-11ec-bfad-8283439871ec_story.html) (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>37</sup> Butler B., Yahr E. What does reality TV owe Black women? *The Washington Post*. 2021. 14 October. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/arts-entertainment/interactive/2021/black-women-reality-tv/> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>38</sup> Tumulty K. More women are tuning out of politics – a danger sign for Democrats in Virginia and beyond. *The Washington Post*. 2021. 12 October. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/10/12/more-women-are-tuning-out-politics-danger-sign-democrats-virginia-beyond/> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>39</sup> Spindel J., Ralston R. Congress might require women to register for the draft. Where so Republicans and Democrats stand? *The Washington Post*. 2021. 15 November. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/11/15/congress-might-require-women-register-draft-where-do-republicans-democrats-stand/> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>40</sup> Our economy was designed to fail women – and it does. *The Washington Post*. 2021. 29 October. URL: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/letters-to-the-editor/our-economy-was-designed-to-fail-women--and-it-does/2021/10/29/90c646f6-35e3-11ec-9662-399cfa75efee\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/letters-to-the-editor/our-economy-was-designed-to-fail-women--and-it-does/2021/10/29/90c646f6-35e3-11ec-9662-399cfa75efee_story.html) (accessed: 15.01.2022).

In 2021, women's sports still provide more outrage than empowerment<sup>41</sup>.

Women of America are not calm right now<sup>42</sup>.

Men and women are typically identified differently within the framework of English-language media discourse. And racial identity is an important feature for Americans, forming a racial niche. That said, racial minorities are included in all possible sociopolitical situations, and this is immediately reflected in media discourse. When expressing their racial affiliation, members of national minorities are making a statement: I'm Black is typically written with a capital B. I'm Asian is also commonly used to place the person in a sociopolitical context and to express belonging to a group.

Media discourse also tends to place white and black people in opposition to one another: The media loves 'missing' White women; Black women are already missing from public view<sup>43</sup>.

To sum up, we can say that modern media discourse focuses strongly on gender. And it is mostly female authors who perpetuate this trend. On the other hand, the topics they cover, as an indicator of social changes in society, start to form a new information block of the English-language media discourse, which thus acquires a noticeable gender slant.

In the British media, the opposition of men and women in British culture can relate to various aspects of life:

Women are more likely to suffer work burnout than men, study finds<sup>44</sup>.

Five ways men contribute more to the climate crisis than women<sup>45</sup>.

We can thus conclude that national gender identity is clearly present in English-language media discourse. When discussing the problems facing society, Brits and Americans typically frame them in the context of gender. Verbal manifestations of national gender identity are quite diverse, and typically come in the form of how certain problems affect women.

<sup>41</sup> Buckner C. In 2021, women's sports still provide more outrage than empowerment. *The Washington Post*. 2021. 01 October. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2021/10/01/nwsl-abuse-soccer-power/> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>42</sup> Rubin J. Women in America are not calm right now. *The Washington Post*. 2021. 06 September. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/09/06/women-american-are-not-calm-right-now/> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>43</sup> Jordan-Zachery J.S. The media loves 'missing White women'. Black women are already missing from public view. 2021. 14 October. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/10/14/media-loves-missing-white-women-black-women-are-already-missing-public-view/> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>44</sup> Young S. Women are more likely to suffer work burnout than men, study finds. *The Independent*. 2018. 31 May. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/work-burnout-men-women-positions-power-self-esteem-family-balance-study-montreal-a8377096.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>45</sup> Javed S. Five ways men contribute more to the climate crisis than women. *The Independent*. 2021. 21 July. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/sustainable-living/climate-crisis-emissions-men-women-study-b1887861.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

## The Emotionality of English Language Media Discourse from the Perspective of its Communicative Characteristics

There are noticeable differences in the way that Brits and Americans show their emotions, and this comes through in the communicative informativeness of media discourse articles. Works on intercultural note that one of the features of English communicative culture is emotional restraint. British people are characterized by calmness and restraint in their observations and typically use far less emotionally coloured language than the situation may require when expressing their attitude to a given subject. Americans, on the other hand, have a higher degree of emotionality and are thus extremely candid when it comes to expressing their feelings, especially if they are talking about a subject that affects them personally. Americans take little care to mask their emotions, and they are very spontaneous when expressing them. It is not customary for them to hide emotions that can be publicly expressed by emotional interjections, screaming and yelling.

It is only natural, therefore, that the features which determine the character of a nation would appear in media texts, despite the standardization of journalism. In one way or another, the text will inevitably reflect the personality of the author both as an individual and as a representative of a particular nation as a whole. Scholars are delving deeper into the subject of the emotionality of the media, highlighting such aspects as (1) the logic of the production and perception of a media product, (2) the boundaries of media discourse, and (3) the semiotic resources used to create emotionality (Zappettini, 2021: 588).

British statesman and politician Winston Churchill said about the British nation: “The British nation is unique in this respect: they are the only people who like to be told how bad things are, who like to be told the worst.” The peculiar pessimism of the British can also be traced on the pages of newspapers and magazines. Scrolling through the feed of British newspapers, it is difficult not to notice the predominance of articles with negatively worded headlines: It will cost lives: experts decry UK government’s mixed Covid-19 messaging<sup>46</sup>.

American newspapers, on the other hand, avoid pessimism at all costs in their headlines. For example, Priorities are tested for working moms at home during the pandemic; or On Politics: Coronavirus at the White House, Colorado Hair Salons are Reopening, With New Rules<sup>47</sup>. It is thus clear to see that Americans tend to have a more optimistic worldview compared to their cousins from across the pond, and this is reflected in the media discursive space.

<sup>46</sup> Perraudin F. ‘It will cost lives’: experts decry UK government’s mixed Covid-19 messaging. *The Guardian*. 2020. 11 May. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/11/it-will-cost-lives-experts-decry-uk-governments-mixed-covid-19-messaging> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>47</sup> Hawryluk M. Colorado Hair Salons Are Reopening, With New Rules. *The New York Times*. 2020. 11 May. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/11/style/colorado-hair-salons-reopening-coronavirus.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

Emotionality can manifest itself in the form of a variety of linguistic expressions and figures of speech. Rhetorical questions are a significant expressive means of syntax. They are used to enhance the emotionality and expressiveness of speech and attract the reader's attention to a particular phenomenon. As such, they are conspicuous in all newspaper headlines:

What Is Next for the Class of 2020?<sup>48</sup>

A Rescue Plan for the Planet?<sup>49</sup>

Will fans make it to the ballpark this year?<sup>50</sup>

In American news reports, authors use rhetorical questions to try and stem the flow of information and force the reader to think for themselves about the question being asked. The unexpected emotional impact created by a rhetorical question is a telling feature of American media discourse. The British dailies also make use of rhetorical questions, although not as actively as the American media, and with greater thematic dependence. In *The Independent* and *The Guardian*, rhetorical questions are most often found in the Voices/Opinion sections, where columnists publish their comments and opinions about various events. Another distinctive feature of the emotionality of the British people is the expression of negative emotions through rhetorical questions.

In British papers, indirect and quoted speech are typically used to convey emotions. Authors insert hyperlinks, comments from third parties and other fragments into their texts. The purpose is not always to clarify information – as a rule, the author will supplement information in the text with a quotation from an expert on the event being covered. These expert comments typically add an interpretation of what is happening. The semantic load of the message increases and becomes more multidimensional, and an additional modality appears in the informational part of the text: the semantic elements of a positive or negative assessment, the modality of probability, an assessment of equivalence, and emotional tension are all evident in it (Akimtseva, 2019).

This allows the author to distance themselves from certain overly emotional words that may appear in the text, disclaiming responsibility for them through the use quotation marks:

Michael Gove has said that the government “absolutely” will not allow a second referendum on Scottish independence within the next five years<sup>51</sup>.

<sup>48</sup> Schleifstein D. What is Next for Class of 2020? *The New York Times*. 2020. 18 June. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/18/opinion/high-school-graduation-coronavirus.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>49</sup> A Rescue Plan for the Planet? Watch Our Debate Here. *The New York Times*. 2020. 10 July. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/10/climate/netting-zero-debate.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>50</sup> Dougherty J. Will fans make it to the ballpark this year? Even as the pandemic rages, the question lingers. *The Washington Post*. 2020. 11 July. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2020/07/11/will-fans-make-it-ballpark-this-year-even-pandemic-rages-question-lingers/> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>51</sup> Woodcock A., Buchan L. “Absolutely no prospect of second referendum on Scottish independence, says Michael Gove. *The Independent*. 2019. 15 December. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/michael-gove-second-referendum-scottish-independence-indyref2-election-results-a9247446.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

“Totally disrespectful”: police interrupt funeral while enforcing social distancing rules over Easter weekend<sup>52</sup>.

Today, the media sphere is increasingly moving away from the use of quotations as a means of providing evidence and giving credibility and objectivity to a text, and is increasingly using various means of transforming quotations to produce the desired impact on the addressee and accomplish stylistic and pragmatic tasks (Ponomarenko, 2011).

British journalists prefer to include comments from third parties both in the body of the article and in the headline, much more so than their American counterparts. If we compare the frequency with which British and American newspapers quote third parties, then we can conclude that Brits demand evidence more than Americans. Take the article “Coronavirus: Schools should be among first to reopen when lockdown eases” published in *The Independent*, for instance, where the author strives to quote an expert in full: “Asked whether the government would have Labour’s backing to reopen schools, Sir Keir replied: What I’m saying is we need to know what the strategy is, discuss it, challenge it and check that it’s right. And then I genuinely would hope we could build consensus around it and if we think it’s the right strategy, the Labour Party would support it<sup>53</sup>. More than this, the author cannot use certain individual words and show too much emotion, so he highlights these moments with quotation marks: “While declining to set out a ‘rival plan’, he insisted he had ‘concerns’ that the closures of schools across the UK were worsening inequalities between children who have resources and those in overcrowded accommodation.” The American press, meanwhile, is not nearly as inclined to quote someone else’s speech – journalists do not always dwell on the fact that these are not his or her words and instead focus the reader’s attention on the events in question: He says the data suggests that children have not been super-spreaders of the coronavirus. But schools, he said, should introduce social distancing, ensuring that students do not mix during breaks, and should provide protective gear for teachers<sup>54</sup>.

While articles in British and American newspapers and magazines serve similar functions, different national and cultural characteristics are reflected in them through the different stylistic frames used by their authors. The language used in the British print media is replete with factual statements and the frequent use of comments by third parties, while that used in American publications is characterized by the use of expressions that create vivid conceptual images. It is thus clear that media discourse

<sup>52</sup> McGowan M. ‘Totally disrespectful’: police interrupt funeral while enforcing social distancing rules over Easter weekend. *The Guardian*. 2020. 13 April. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/apr/14/totally-disrespectful-police-interrupt-funeral-while-enforcing-social-distancing-rules-over-easter-weekend> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>53</sup> Cowburn A. Coronavirus: Schools should be among the first to reopen when lockdown eases, Keir Starmer suggests. *The Independent*. 2020. 15 April. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/coronavirus-schools-reopen-lockdown-update-keir-starmer-labour-a9465646.html> (accessed: 15.01.2022).

<sup>54</sup> Dixon R., Adam K., Patrick O. In glimpse of life after lockdown, some countries begin to reopen schools. *The Washington Post*. 2020. 18 April. URL: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/coronavirus-schools-reopen/2020/04/18/0c3dfcb6-7e61-11ea-84c2-0792d8591911\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/coronavirus-schools-reopen/2020/04/18/0c3dfcb6-7e61-11ea-84c2-0792d8591911_story.html) (accessed: 15.01.2022).



is a resource that reflects the national character of a nation, and this is reproduced on the pages of news media articles. This leads us to the conclusion that the informational portion of English-language media discourse has a noticeable national flavour.

The issues we have discussed are important not only for philologists when it comes to gaining a proper scientific understanding, but also as independent aspects in the teaching of English, especially in universities teaching journalism, international communication and business interaction, social and political activities, advertising, etc. Experts in these areas need to be able to correctly understand the information presented in the print media and not be misled by adept communicative manipulations. They also need to develop their own skills in the competent use of various verbal means to effectively influence the people they interact with in various professional situations (Desyatova, Malakhova, 2018; Ledeneva, 2018). In this respect, articles in respected publications serve as an excellent source of material for studying the pragmatic potential of English-language media discourse.

## Conclusion

Considered in terms of its communicative characteristics, English-language media discourse is based on three basic components of language communication, namely the author (addresser), the addressee, and the information itself, in a kind of functional actualization where each element is determined by the others. The segment of media discourse we have analysed clearly demonstrates the special purpose that information serves for nations, with the people taking part in the transmission of this information on an equal basis with the author. The linguistic features of this interaction are manifested, for example, in the creation of headlines for newspaper and magazine articles, which quote specific individuals of that nation in the form of direct speech.

An analysis of English-language media discourse reveals noticeable differences in its British and American varieties, which is also reflected both in the language design of the text and in the information transmitted by it.

Another feature of English-language media discourse is the gender component of the information being transmitted, where the author talks about this information from the standpoint of his or her gender role.

The emotional component of the writing style is another prominent feature of English-language media discourse that manifests itself in a variety of ways of linguistic actualization that resonate with British and American audiences.

English-language media discourse is characterized by a deep understanding of the communicative nature of modern social reality, which testifies to the deep psychological connection of the subjects of communication. Considering the many factors that ultimately regulate the information presented by the internet sources we have looked at, we can conclude that this fits into the category of professional, and therefore business, communication.

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