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REPRESENTATION OF EVENT PERSPECTIVE IN NEWS DISCOURSE

Summary. The article studies the linguistic means of verbalizing the event perspective in modern English news discourse. It is found that in the American magazine *Newsweek* and British *New Statesman* the events are arranged in the same way when they concern neither the U.K. nor the USA, or when they evaluate these countries positively. Conversely, when the article has a negative content and concerns either of these countries, the home journalists try to be restrained and use words with neutral connotation; while the opposite country gives a more informative and detailed coverage.

Key words: perspective, event, news discourse, linguistic means.

Introduction. Perspectivization is an inextricable property of linguistic expressions: examples vary from lexical instances of spatial expressions like *X is below Y* versus *Y is above X* [17, p. 63] to more elusive discourse-level cases of perspective-dependence, like point-of-view narration [5, p. 601]. When speakers decide to encode a meaning in linguistic form, they often have to choose among a wide range of available words and constructions. The language offers more than one conventional means for representing an event or an idea, allowing thus the speakers to take different perspectives on what they want to communicate [7, p. 23]. To illustrate this, we have picked up two headlines from different news magazines stating the same event: (1) *Putin vs. ISIS: Russia's Great* <u>Game</u> *in Syria* (New Statesman 15.10.2015): (2) *How Putin* <u>Wins</u> *in Syria* (Newsweek 06.10.2015). In the British article from *New Statesman* magazine, the participants are *Russia* and *ISIS* and their actions are described as *game*. While the American journalist from *Newsweek* magazine names only one participant – *Russia* and states the action by the verb *to win* which implies achieving victory in a game.

The study of linguistic means of verbalizing the event perspective in news discourse is **topical** because it contributes to understanding how the news stories are made, since there is always more than one way of representing an event and the speaker takes a certain perspectives on it. In this paper, we are going to analyze the representation of event perspective in British and American magazine news articles.

The analysis of recent publications. The notion of perspective is being investigated in cognitive linguistics and in discourse studies. In cognitive linguistics, perspective is an imaginary point of view from which a subject contemplates an object [17, p. 64; 9, p. 48; 16, p. 39]. In discourse studies, perspective is interpreted wider – as a location of a speaker in a particular place of the real or imagined world [8, p. 6]. In this vein, perspectivization is understood as verbalization of physical and social circumstances of text production [7, p. 23]. To physical factors, the researchers refer time and place

of communication, the presence of other participants and the objects that come in sight during communication and are verbalized; social factors include the speakers' age, gender, profession, race etc.

The researches of perspectivization in cognitive linguistics and in discourse studies are complementary: both approaches have common ground in the presumption that one and the same object may be perceived by communicants in different ways. With this in mind, cognitive-discursive approach to perspective has emerged in recent years, where due to mutual contribution of both fields of inquiry such phenomena were explained: analogies and differences between spatial (locational/path-related) and mental perspective; sequence of tense and "temporal anchoring"; the role of particles for perspectivization; point-of-view narration; the role of epithets and other "judge-dependent" expressions [7, p. 23] in the construction of perspective in different discourses.

Among various discourse types, the notion of perspective is especially conspicuous in media texts, because they provide news and opinions as viewed by journalists or media agencies [1, p. 26]. Despite the wide range of research into perspectivizing in media discourse, this notion has so far evaded the grasp of comparative analysis, showing how an event is described in American and British media. Though there have been several analyses of newspaper coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict of 2002 and describing London riots of 2011 [13], we think there is still a lot of ground to be covered.

The aim of this work is to study perspectivization of events in modern English news discourse. **The material** of the research is constituted by 50 news articles – 25 articles were taken from *Newsweek* and the other 25 ones – from *New Statesman* magazine.

Investigation. In linguistics, along with the term **perspective**, the terms **point of view** and **stance** are used to refer to the speaker's choice of what to say and how.

Perspective, Point of View, Stance: Definitions in Contrast. The term **perspective** originates from Latin *perspectus,* which is the form of past participle of the Latin verb *perspicere* meaning *to look through* [12]. With the prefix *per-* meaning *through* and stem *specere* implying *to look*, the word *perspective* originally referred to an optical glass, as a telescope, used to help a person see [12]. Being now archaic, the meaning of perspective as an optical glass emphasizes its instrumental use, i.e. a person used the device for viewing objects. In modern English, the word *perspective* grounded itself in the sphere of painting as a specific term to denote a method of drawing a picture, and afterwards broadened its meaning to be metaphorically used in many realms to refer to a view [12]. These meanings make possible understanding of perspective in language wherein it became prominent afterwards. In the sphere of painting, *perspective* is a method of drawing a picture that makes objects

look solid and shows distance and depth, or the effect this method produces in a picture [10]. In this definition, the words "distance" and "depth" underscore the spatial relation of objects as they might appear to the eye. In this meaning, the word *perspective* enters the constructions like *the artist's use of perspective, a picture in perspective* where the original instrumental meaning is clearly perceived – the artist represents the objects on a surface in those relations he or she sees them or wants the audience to see them.

The meaning of the word *perspective* was extended to refer to any kind of view – both a visual scene, a vista, and also a mental view, which is understood as a way of thinking about and understanding something (such as a particular issue or life in general) [10]. This meaning of the word *perspective* is realized in the following constructions: *perspective on smth, from somebody's / historical / international etc. perspective*, e.g. *The story is told from the perspective of a teenage boy in the 1940s* [12], also – *a wider / broader perspective*.

The last definition of perspective underscores the abilities of a person to select referents of different importance – a sensible way of judging and comparing situations [10], the capacity to view things in their true relations or relative importance [12]. This meaning of the word *perspective* is realized in the following constructions: *to maintain my (his etc.) perspective, to put into perspective, to get / keep smth in perspective, to lose sense of perspective*. Thus, in the last meaning which is used further in our work the spatial relations of objects are metaphorically transferred into the realm of *selecting referents of different importance*.

The selection of separate elements of a visual scene or extendedly an event is caused by a certain **point of view** [15, p. 47] which is generally defined as a place from which an event is observed [12]. Therefore, point of view is wider; it determines the number of elements of an event perceived [3, p. 231]. For example, two headlines from different magazines representing the same event – UK election that took place on 7 May 2015 are told from the same point of view but from different perspectives: (1) *UK General Election results: Europe Reacts* (Newsweek 28.04.2015); (2) *What do other countries think about the general election?* (New Statesman 28.04.2015). As for the point of view signifying the quantity of elements the reader is presented, in both headlines two participants are named – the UK and the European countries. This means that both authors' points of view limit the readers' knowledge about other elements of the event – the UK is linked to the event itself and the European countries provide reaction to it. Perspective, on the other hand, specifies point of view suggesting where the journalist is in relation to the place of the event described and who and where the readers are: in the headline from Newsweek *UK General Election results: Europe Reacts* (Newsweek 28.04.2015) the proper names such as *UK* and *Europe* imply that the journalist and the target audience are in neither of these countries (in fact, they are in the USA), showing a more distant or panoramic perspective, while the headline *What do other countries think about the general election?* (New Statesman 28.04.2015) from the British magazine suggests closer or involved perspective, since it opposes Britain and other countries, showing that both the journalist and the readership are in Britain and the "outer world" is "there" observing them.

Unlike point of view which is author-controlled and reader-oriented, **stance** is the position of the author exclusively, expression of author's attitudes, feelings, judgments, or commitment concerning the content of a message. The term *stance* originates from Latin *stans,* which is the form of present participle of the Latin verb *stare* meaning *to stand*. It came in English through French *estance* in 14th century and meant *position, posture, stay*. In modern English the word *stance* is used in its direct meaning to denote a way of standing or being placed; a posture; and in its figurative meaning to refer to intellectual or emotional attitude toward somebody or something, e.g. to take an antiwar stance [12]. For example, *Hollande, as before, took a more accommodative stance* (New Statesman 06.07.2015) or *The increasingly strong rhetoric from the center-left SPD leader, along with the uncompromising stance of Merkel's own conservatives, leaves the chancellor little room for maneuver in any new talks with Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras* (News week 06.07.2015).

In Linguistics, the term *stance* was introduced in 1989 by Douglas Biber and Edward Finegan in their work *Styles of stance in English: Lexical and grammatical marking of evidentiality and affect* [4, p. 93]. In their work, stance is defined as the lexical and grammatical expression of attitudes, feelings, judgments, or commitment concerning the propositional content of a message. They claim that various speech styles of English are marked by stance. The language has a set of stance markers. There is the adverbial marking of stance, as well as adjectival, verbal and modal markers of stance. Douglas Biber and Edward Finegan divided the stance markers into 12 categories based on semantic and grammatical criteria: 1) affect markers (adverbs, verbs and adjectives); 2) certainty adverbs; 3) certainty verbs; 4) certainty adjectives; 5) doubt adverbs; 6) doubt verbs; 7) doubt adjectives; 8) hedges; 9) emphatics; 10) possibility modals; 11) necessity modals; 12) predictive modals [ibid.]. By consideration of the predominant stance features different stance styles are singled out. Overall, stance styles are identified: emphatic expression of affect, expository expression of doubt, faceless. The linguistic expression of stance is manifested through evidentiality and affect. Evidentiality refers to the speaker's expressed attitudes toward knowledge: towards its reliability, the mode of knowing, and the adequacy of its linguistic expression. Affect involves the expression of emotions, feelings and moods.

What these notions have in common is that they capture aspects of conceptualization that cannot be sufficiently analyzed in terms of properties of the object of conceptualization, but, in one way or another, necessarily involve a subject of conceptualization. The cover term that has come to be used for different ways of viewing a particular situation is "construal" [6, p. 467]. All the definitions imply not only that one and the same object can be experienced differently from different positions. It also indicates that the way reference to an object is understood by a receiver depends on the signs used by the sender. This is of special importance if the object talked about is not a part of a common perceptual situation. Hence, we may hypothesize that the divergence of perspectives or orientations may also be found in a different use of language by people talking from different positions or viewpoint. This fact is crucial in the discourse of news, since the readers do not have immediate access to the events reported and in their understanding of the events they have to rely largely on the way how they are presented by the journalists.

Language Means of Representing Event Perspective name the components if an event, therefore event structure should be first considered.

Event Structure. In this work, we define event as a change in a situation which is reported. Despite the ultimate uniqueness of events, there are universal elements that constitute them. They are participants, actions, objects/instruments, time, place, result/consequences. For example, in the headline *Obama and Putin*

Clash over *Syria at U.N. Meeting* (Newsweek 29.09.2015) the participants are expressed by proper names *Obama* and *Putin*, while the actions – with the help of the verb *to clash*.

Our knowledge about the commonalities across a set of events is a form of semantic knowledge, and the knowledge structures that store it are referred to as *event-schemas*. Whereas event models represent particular events (instances), "event-schemas are generic, semantic representations that capture classes of events (types) by conveying the elements (e.g. people, objects, locations etc.) that are typically involved, and the relations among those elements" [14, p. 27]. The concept of event-schema [11, p. 15] is related to the more specific notions of *script* [2, p. 716] and *structured event complex* [18, p. 1158].

Nominative Units for Event Components. "Participants" are usually named with the help of nouns that denote people, e.g. *Shaker Aamer, the last British resident held in Guantanamo Bay, has been released and is on his way back to the U.K., BBC reports* (Newsweek 30.10.2015). "*Shaker Aamer*" and "*resident*" are the examples of the element "*people*". Or the same element of the event structure may be expressed by the nouns that denote institutions metonymically, e.g. *By October 5, in fact, the Pentagon had become convinced that the majority of Russian air strikes thus far had targeted not ISIS units, but U.S. trained rebel groups in various parts of the country.* (Newsweek 06.10.2015). In this sentence, "*The Pentagon*" is used as a metonym for the U.S. Department of Defense.

"Actions" are signified with the help of verbs which may embrace the meaning of activity (to walk, to speak, to play, to study), e.g. *Cameron says U.K. drone killed British ISIS fighters in Syria* (Newsweek 07.09.15); process (to sleep, to wait, to live), e.g. *They had found the right house – an eye doctor lived there during the slaughter that came to be known as the Armenian Genocide of 1915 and sheltered the grandfather of one of them* (Newsweek 23.04.2015); state (to be, to know, to lie), e.g. *Moscow and Iran, Damascus's heretofore primary benefactor, are now making it clear that they are all-in when it comes to defending the current regime* (Newsweek 06.10.2015); relation (to consist, to resemble, to lace), e.g. *Yet what today's speeches from US president Barack Obama and Russia's Vladimir Putin lacked in theatricals, they made up for in political significance*(New Statement 28.09.2015); feelings (to like, to love, to adore), e.g. *But while stating that* "*the door is open*" *(though not as open as he would like), he warned that* "*There's not a lot of time left. There is urgency for Greece and there is urgency for Europe*" (New Statement 06.07.2015). Besides, the actions may be expressed with the help of abstract nouns and gerunds. For example, *The court on Thursday found Karadzic guilty of 10 of the 11 counts of war crimes, including genocide in Srebrenica, and sentenced him to 40 years imprisonment*(Newsweek 23.04.2016).

"Objects/Instruments" can be expressed by a noun, the gerund, the infinitive, a pronoun, a noun phrase, a verbal phrase, an infinitive construction, a gerundial complex, a numeral or an object clause. E.g. *A remarkable group of archaeologists are battling to save the country's ancient artifacts* (New Statement 22.09.2015) (an infinitive construction); *Russia has reportedly begun airstrikes against Isis in Syria* "*at the request of the Syrian president*" (New Statement 30.09.2015) (a noun).

The component "time" may be expressed by a noun, an adverb and by a numeral, e.g. *Baghdad has earlier sent the respective request to the international coalition(adverb). Journalists in Washington, however, are reporting that the first strikes appear to have hit not Isis controlled areas, but Rebels in Homs:*

On Monday, Obama and Putin exchanged thinly-veiled blows on the subject (noun) (New Statement 30.09.2015).

The component "place" is verbalised by nouns that are divided into proper names and common nouns, or by adverbs of place, e.g. *Putin has long been troubled by the fate of Eduard Shevardnadze in Georgia, Askar Akayev in Kyrgyzstan, Viktor Yanukovych in Ukraine, Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia, Hosni Mubarak in Egypt and Muammar al-Gaddafi in Libya; Then, after the 9/11 attacks, Putin sold the Chechnya war to the west as* "*a common struggle with Islamic terrorism*" (New Statement 15.10.2015).

So any event is arranged by a journalists' selection of separate elements/components from the set of elements immanent to events. Such a selection of separate elements creates an event perspective.

Results. The analysis of 50 news articles from the American magazine *Newsweek* and British magazine *New Statesman* reveals that the events are arranged in the same way in two cases: firstly, when the event described concerns neither the U.K. nor the USA, and secondly, when the event described is evaluated positively in both magazines. Let us consider two pairs of headlines. The event concerns neither the U.K. nor the USAin (1) *Russia Begins Airstrikes in Syria* "*at the Request of Bashar Al-Assad*" (New Statesman 30.09.2015), and (2) *Russia Confirms First Airstrikes in Syria* (Newsweek 30.09.2015). In both headlines, the participant is *Russia*; the action is carrying out airstrikes. Neither the U.K. nor the USAis involved; therefore, the event is presented in the same way by both media.

Similar choice of linguistic units is observed when the event described is evaluated positively in both magazines: (1) *The Last British Guantanamo Detainee Shaker Aamer is Released and on his Way Home* (New Statesman 30.10.2015), and (2) *Shaker Aamer, Last Briton in Guantanamo Bay, is Released* (Newsweek 30.10.2015). In both magazines, the release of the last British detainee is described nearly in the same way – only the British magazine pays attention to his going home.

Conversely, when the article concerns either the U.K., or the USA, and has a negative content, the country in question tries to be restrained and uses words that have neutral connotation; while the opposite country gives more informative and detailed coverage. For example: (1) CIA Torture Report: *The UK Must Be Honest about Its Complicity in These Grisly Crimes* (New Statesman 10.12.2012), and (2) *British Soldiers Accused of Torture and Abuse during Iraq Occupation* (Newsweek 17.12.2014). In these headlines, British soldiers' mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners is presented from different perspectives: the American *Newsweek* appeals to social security through the words *torture and abuse*, while in British magazine the moral aspect is emphasized by the words *honest* and *complicity*. Comparing the participants, the American magazine lays all the blame on the soldiers, while in the British media the whole country is held responsible.

Finally, the British media sometimes tries to protect the reputation of the country when the content of an article is negative, e.g. (1) *David Cameron Reveals that an RAF Drone Killed a British Jihadist in Syria* (New Statesman 7.09.2015), (2) *Cameron Says U.K. Drone Killed British ISIS Fighters in Syria* (Newsweek 7.09.2015). From the British perspective, one of the participants is "an RAF drone", while from the US perspective, the same participant is named as "U.K. drone". Besides, the noun *jihadist* has got negative charge of meaning evoking some unpleasant emotions and associations, while *ISIS fighter* is a more neutral term.

Conclusion. News discourse provides information about recent events. Event is understood as a change in a situation which

is reported. Despite the ultimate uniqueness of events, there are universal elements that constitute them. The selection of separate elements creates an event perspective.

The analysis of 50 news articles from the American magazine *Newsweek* and British magazine *New Statesman* reveals that the events are arranged in the same way in two cases: firstly, when the event described concerns neither the U.K. nor the USA, and secondly, when the event described is evaluated positively in both magazines. Conversely, when the article concerns either the U.K., or the USA, and has a negative content, then the country in question tries to be restrained and uses words that have neutral connotation; while the opposite country gives more informative and detailed coverage. Finally, the British media sometimes tries to protect the reputation of the country when the content of an article is negative.

The prospects for future investigation are seen in the possibility of analyzing event perspective in other types of media discourse.

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Данильченко І. В., Веленчук Ю. І. Репрезентація перспективи подій у дискурсі новин

Анотація. Статтю присвячено аналізу мовних засобів вербалізації перспективи подій у сучасному англомовного дискурсі новин. Виявлено, що в американському журналі Newsweek та британському New Statesman події зображуються однаково, якщо вони не стосуються ні Великої Британії, ані США, або зображують названі країни у позитивному світлі. Натомість, коли стаття розкриває негативну інформацію про ці держави, журналісти зображують події у своїй країні коротко, вживаючи номінативні одиниці нейтральної семантики, а про іншу країну подають розлогий репортаж.

Ключові слова: перспектива, подія, дискурс новин, мовні засоби.

Данильченко И. В., Веленчук Ю. И. Репрезентация перспективы событий в дискурсе новостей

Аннотация. Статья посвящена анализу перспективы событий в современном англоязычном дискурсе новостей. Установлено, что в американском журнале Newsweek и британском New Statesman события изображаются одинаково, когда они не имеют отношения ни к Великобритании, ни к США, или изображают эти страны в позитивном свете. Когда же статья раскрывает негативную информацию об этих странах, журналисты изображают события в своей стране кратко, употребляя номинативные единицы нейтральной семантики, а о другой стране подают детальный репортаж.

Ключевые слова: перспектива, событие, дискурс новостей, языковые средства.