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Language representation of modality category in news discourse

Abstract

The present paper aims to examine language patterns of modality category actualization in news discourse. Continuous sampling was used to select 65 informational articles from 2 American journals – “Time” and “Newsweek” that served as the material for the study. Morphological, syntactical and lexical means of reality and unreality manifestation were identified and further interpreted using grammatical, semantic and contextual analysis. The obtained results indicate the following. The modality category in the news discourse was realized in 5 particular meanings: 1) actuality in present usual situations; 2) actuality in present current situations; 3) actuality related to the past; 4) reality in a broad sense; 5) unreality. It can be explained by the author’s aim to provide updated detailed informing of readers about any significant event. Describing this or that event, the author intentionally chooses morphological, syntactical and, very rarely, lexical means which give an opportunity to reveal subjective evaluative attitude amid the objective narrative that makes up the modality category. A major morphological means was a tense-aspect verb form. Syntactical instruments involved various interrogative constructions including parallel ones.

Keywords: category of modality, reality, unreality, evaluative addresser’s attitude, addressee, news discourse

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