

Persuasiveness As A Mechanism Of Media Influence: Cognitive, Affective, And Linguistic Perspectives

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Received: 15 October 2025; **Accepted:** 08 November 2025; **Published:** 13 December 2025

Abstract: This article examines the mechanisms of media influence aimed at shaping opinions, beliefs, and social or individual behavior, and explores persuasiveness as a central component of media impact. A review of scientific literature reveals two major research approaches to persuasiveness: psychological and linguistically oriented. Persuasiveness is conceptualized as a speech macro-act grounded in cognitive, affective, and argumentative strategies employed by the addresser to influence the recipient's mental sphere and regulate their behavior. The study highlights the role of persuasive communication as a form of mental-verbal activity that manifests in persuasive discourse and is driven by the addresser's global communicative intention. The article underscores the importance of analyzing persuasiveness at the intersection of cognition and communication.

Keywords: Persuasiveness, media discourse, argumentation, speech macro-act, communicative pragmatics, influence mechanisms, persuasive communication.

Introduction: The mechanisms of media influence in various situations of perceiving the surrounding world are primarily aimed at shaping opinions and beliefs, as well as modeling social and individual behavior. These processes have led to the introduction of a new communicative form of influence in the media - persuasiveness, which is an important component of media impact. It produces the process of influence using evidence and arguments while engaging the emotional potential of the expression.

Analysis of scientific literature devoted to the problems of persuasiveness allows us to objectively distinguish two directions that have developed in the study of this phenomenon: psychological [Hovland 1953; Petty 1986; Chaiken 1986 etc.] and linguistically oriented [Hoffmann 1996; Kosta 1996; Mann 1999; Moilanen 1996; Sandig 1996]. The criterion for their further differentiation is the priority given to solving either psychological or linguistic tasks.

It is known that the term "persuasiveness" (Latin *persuasio*, English *persuasion*, German *Persuasion* - "to persuade," "to convince") entered the scientific discourse of linguistics relatively long ago. The phenomena of language and speech described by this concept have been studied within the framework

stylistics, text linguistics, psycholinguistics, cognitive linguistics, the theory of speech impact, and the theory of argumentation [Golodnov 2003; Goncharova 2003; Chernyavskaya 2006; Sheigal 2000 et al.].

In foreign linguistics, the term "persuasiveness" is productively used for the functional-pragmatic characterization and operational analysis of texts that implement the addresser's method of influencing the recipient's mental sphere (their opinions and evaluations) in order to regulate their behavior in the addresser's interests.

METHODS

According to the definition in T. Lewandowski's linguistic dictionary, in the most general sense, the term "persuasiveness" means a process or method of influencing a person towards a certain opinion, position, or action using verbal means. In persuasiveness, we are dealing not with the transmission of information or presentation of arguments, but with "language signals that aim to create a specific effect through the affective-connotative use of lexical units and sentences".

Accordingly, persuasive communication involves "persuading", which is simultaneously expressed in the form of convincing someone of something through

linguistic and argumentative means for the purpose of influence, by changing mental concepts. In certain contexts, the term "persuasiveness" can acquire a negative connotation, as the concept it refers to is associated with manipulation and the use of specific linguistic means to influence the recipient's opinion and behavior. The negative tone may also arise because direct persuasive action implies a change (in the expected direction) of the thought process in the reader's mind, leading to a subsequent perlocutionary effect. Nevertheless, according to researchers, the negative orientation of the term "persuasiveness" remains debatable. It can only be definitively stated that persuasiveness focuses on the impactful potential of the text.

In research works, persuasiveness is considered as one of the possible components of the communicative-pragmatic strategy of the text, optimally corresponding to the communicative intention or "conceptual-thematic attitudes" of the addresser. However, the linguistic essence of persuasiveness is much more complex. In a number of studies, the process of persuasive influence is described as a form of mental-speech activity: persuasive communication. The understanding of persuasiveness as a speech macro-act (E. Mann, R. Kosta) is also indicative, representing a collection of utterances characterized by a particular illocutionary force. The unit of the speech macro-act of persuasiveness - the persuasive - represents a prototypical model, a set of rules for carrying out a speech action, to which a conventional persuasive illocutionary force is attached.

The concretization of the prototype of the speech macro-act of persuasiveness occurs in a real communication situation in the form of a text. At the same time, the connection between the speech macro-act of persuasiveness and its result - the persuasive text - is realized within the framework of a persuasive communicative situation, i.e., at the discursive level. Persuasive communication, persuasive discourse, and the speech macro-act of persuasiveness are, in this case, prototypes that guide the addresser and recipient in terms of persuasive communication.

RESULTS

Thus, persuasiveness represents the material embodiment of a complex action (macro-act of persuasiveness) using illocutionary force, subordinate to the global intention of the addresser, oriented towards the recipient, and aimed at achieving a certain perlocutionary effect.

When performing a persuasive speech act, two communicative-pragmatic intentions arise:

1. to influence the addressee's consciousness,

opinions, and evaluations;

2. to encourage them to perform certain actions and change their behavior.

These intentions can be realized in two ways:

1. intellectually, i.e., through rational arguments;
2. affectively, relying on imagination and subjective factors - emotional evaluations and stereotypes.

Thus, persuasive influence implies achieving the desired goal through persuasion based on rational justification, not excluding, but rather assuming and taking into account emotional-evaluative means of influence, i.e., subjective factors.

DISCUSSION

Therefore, following A.V. Golodnov, we will understand persuasiveness as "a method of the addresser's influence on the recipient's mental sphere (their opinions and evaluations) to regulate the recipient's behavior in the interests of the addresser". Accordingly, any action aimed at evoking a certain attitude or action from the message recipient can be called persuasive.

Persuasive communication is considered by A.V. Golodnov as a special form of mental-speech activity of communicants, which exerts a specific influence of the message sender on the recipient in order to obtain from them a decision to perform or refuse to perform a post-communicative action that is beneficial for the addresser.

In analytical genres, one can speak of the leading role of persuasiveness, as the author of the text, while developing their ideas, primarily aims to engage the reader in "co-thinking" and cooperation, to evoke in them a desire to assimilate these ideas and continue them through concrete actions.

For a more detailed study of persuasiveness as a linguistic phenomenon, it is necessary to examine this phenomenon at the intersection of cognition and communication.

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