

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2020.23.3.9>**ЭФФЕКТ ОРЕОЛА В ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОМ ДИСКУРСЕ АНГЛОЯЗЫЧНЫХ ИНТЕРНЕТ-СМИ**

Научная статья

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**Аннотация**

Статья посвящена вопросам эмоционально-оценочного воздействия, при этом особое внимание уделяется исследованию эффекта ореола, который заключается в том, что при упоминании известной политической личности его положительный имидж, авторитет и известность проецируется на всех окружающих его людей, вынуждая читателей принимать его мнение как не требующее доказательств. Автор статьи рассматривает эффект ореола как одно из средств имплицитной оценки политических событий, явлений и лиц, а также приводит конкретные случаи и средства реализации данного средства в политическом дискурсе современных англоязычных Интернет-СМИ. Исходя из предлагаемого анализа языковых данных, было доказано, что эффект ореола является одним из распространенных способов манипулятивного воздействия автора политического дискурса на адресата СМИ. Статья способствует пониманию дискурсивных инструментов воздействия в современных Интернет-СМИ, влияющих на восприятие обществом освещаемых событий.

**Ключевые слова:** эффект ореола, оценка, политический дискурс, воздействие, Интернет-СМИ.

**THE HALO EFFECT IN THE POLITICAL DISCOURSE OF THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ONLINE MEDIA**

Research article

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**Abstract**

The article is devoted to the issues of emotional impact with particular attention being paid to the study of the halo effect which means that when mentioning a well-known political person, his positive image, authority and fame are projected onto all the people around him, forcing readers to accept his opinion without any evidence. The author of the article considers the halo effect as one of the implicit means of evaluating the political events, phenomena as well as politicians. The specific cases and language means of implementing this tool in the political discourse of the modern English-language online media are presented. As evidenced by the suggested analysis of the linguistic data, it is proved that the halo effect is one of the most common ways of exerting manipulation by the author of media discourse on the addressee. The article promotes deeper understanding of modern mass media discursive tools which shape and impact public opinion about the covered events.

**Keywords:** halo effect, evaluation, political discourse, impact, online media.

**Introduction**

Political communication is considered as one of the most significant forms of interaction between a person, society and the government. Modern online media as a mediator between the government and society have become an instrument of the political struggle for power as well as a channel of political communication [1, P. 54]. According to G. Shishkov, "modern media give the ruling class a powerful weapon of influence on those people who have not even seen each other" [2]. Thus, there has been a growing interest in the study of political communication in terms of linguistics, rhetoric, sociology, political science and other areas of humanitarian knowledge. Moreover, the attention of many pundits is attracted by both methods of influence on public opinion and means of forming an assessment of significant events, people or phenomena that are covered or discussed in online media.

Political discourse is characterized by both texts of a truly informative nature and emotional content. It is assumed that both of these parameters can be represented in the texts of online media. Furthermore, it is important to note that from the linguistic point of view, the interest in the political discourse is caused not by the fact of the presence or absence of this evaluative component, but by an inventory of language tools which are capable of implementing this evaluation [3].

Evaluation is a complicated cognitive process, implying the existence of two opposite spheres of the semantic field — "good" and "bad". Meanwhile, the assessment of various social events, people or phenomena in online media is determined by the emotions that the object of evaluation provokes [4, P. 126]. However, first and foremost, the assessment in online media largely depends on the author of the media discourse and his or her attitude towards the events or people being evaluated. Thus, following Y.V. Rozhdestvensky, we tend to assume that the author of the media identifies himself with an addressee as well as with the newspaper for which he works or «serves» as described in the slogans of the lapdog media "We work for you" and «We provide information that we need and that interests you» [5, P. 176].

The presence of evaluating component in the political discourse results in the impact on the addressee, the formation of a certain mindset, a particular attitude towards the government and its positive or negative assessment. To implement the evaluation the authors of the political discourse resort to various language and rhetoric means.

It seems obvious that evaluation can be presented both explicitly and implicitly. It should be emphasized that political discourse is characterised by the fact that some part of information that is broadcast in the media is transmitted by the author

implicitly. In this regard, many scientists talk about the active role of the addressee in this type of discourse, in which the author has greater opportunities for transferring information and its meaning into implications and a subtext (irony, hints, language games, etc). One of the implicit means of implementing evaluation is the use of the "halo effect" when referring to authorities. This effect is increasingly popular and noticeable in the modern mass media but is insufficiently studied by the researchers.

### Method

The methodology of this study is based on a discourse analysis of the text. This methodological approach is the key to understanding the social processes associated with mass perception of social problems covered in the media. The reliability of the scientific results is supported by the convincing analysis of the collected linguistic material taken from the modern newspapers dated 2017-2020. The method of continuous sampling was used to collect the material.

### Discussion

One of the unspoken rules of communication is "worship" and idolization of authority. In the political discourse a reference to authority is virtually a substitute for evidence of the author's viewpoint. It is needless to say that a person idolizes people of higher social standing. Hence, the reference to authority is often used as an argument accepted without criticism or any factual evidence. Thus, the authors of online media appeal to authorities in order to enhance their own image, increase the impact of their words and exert pressure on the addressee. In other words, in order to be persuasive in the modern media and influence the addressee, the author of the media discourse needs to know the views and attitudes of those whom he is to convince as well as refer to those sources that are authoritative for his readers.

When famous people (politicians, public figures, etc.) are mentioned alongside with other personalities, the so-called "halo effect" arises [6, P. 251]. According to A. A. Stepanov, "the halo effect is one of the most important properties of the concept of authority and includes the fact that the authority of a person is projected onto all the people around him" [Ibid.]. Let us consider the definition of the halo effect: «the positive opinion that someone has of a person, product, company, etc. as a whole, which is based on an earlier opinion of one particular quality or feature» [7]. Thus, the authority, positive image and fame of one famous person is transferred to another when mentioning of his opinion about the latter. This is one of the most common methods of manipulative influence on the addressee in the political discourse. Let us consider the following examples:

(1) *Boris Johnson backs Liam Fox to lead World Trade Organisation... Hours before the deadline for member states to put forward potential candidates, government sources confirmed that the prime minister would back Dr Fox* [8].

(2) *Donald Trump has backed Boris Johnson to be the next Prime Minister Mr Trump, who is visiting the UK for a three-day state visit on Monday, said he thinks the former foreign secretary would be "excellent" as a successor to Theresa May. Speaking to the Sun, Mr Trump said: "But I think Boris would do a very good job. I think he would be excellent." The President added: "I like him. I have always liked him. I don't know that he is going to be chosen, but I think he is a very good guy, a very talented person"* [9].

Example 1 shows that the authoritative opinion of Boris Johnson about another politician is used by the author as propaganda. In particular, B. Johnson's authority and fame are projected onto this politician and the reader cannot but agree that this politician is really good since B. Johnson approves of him. To reinforce a positive image of the politician, verbs with a positive meaning are used (*back, like*). Example 2 demonstrates that when mentioning famous politicians (Donald Trump and Theresa May) next to another famous politician (B. Johnson) and using the words with a positive meaning (*excellent, a very good job, a very good guy, a very talented person*) undoubtedly increases the authority of the latter in the eyes of the readers.

In some cases, the author uses the halo effect to discredit political opponents and create a negative image of them. Let us consider this example:

3. *Barack Obama re-entered the national political debate, assailing his successor as a "threat to our democracy" and a demagogue practicing the "politics of fear and resentment". [Mr. Obama]: "I don't mean to pretend I'm channeling Abraham Lincoln now, but that's not what he had in mind, I think, when he helped form the Republican Party. It's not conservative. It sure isn't normal. It's radical"* [10].

In this example Barack Obama criticizes the policy of D. Trump, whom he calls the "threat to our democracy" as well as "a demagogue, who is practising the policy of fear and resentment". Negative nouns (*threat, demagogue, fear and resentment*) and adjectives (*radical*) are used to accuse the opponent and create his negative image. For the purpose of manipulative influence on the addressee B. Obama also uses references to the values of American society, for example, such as democracy. The halo effect as well as mentioning the democratic values is aimed at convincing the audience in the rightness of his opinion and creating a negative image of D. Trump and his policy.

The headlines of many newspaper articles about politics contain the halo effect when the author intends to discredit an opponent:

4. *Theresa May has criticised Donald Trump and said he has a responsibility to condemn far right views following his response to the violent white supremacist rally in Charlottesville* [11].

5. *Ed Miliband has criticised Theresa May for not signing a letter from global leaders criticising US President Donald Trump for dropping out of the Paris Accord on climate change* [12].

In both examples well-known politicians criticize their opponents, while the degree of their persuasion and impact on the addressee depends on the credibility of these politicians: if a politician is credible in the eyes of the addressee, then his or her opinion is undoubtedly taken for granted without any hesitation or evidence.

## Results

As suggested from the analyzed material, it can be inferred that the halo effect is used in the political discourse to create both a positive and negative image (either opinion or attitude) of some politician (or political event) in order to manipulate the readers' thinking and opinion. The spectrum of the linguistic means include both references to authorities and emotionally marked words including intensifying adverbs, common nouns, verbs and adjectives with emotionally expressive meaning. It is also important to emphasize that in order to manipulate the reader the author not only does enhance the image of a politician but also improves his own image by referring to authorities, which, in turn, undoubtedly inspires confidence in the audience and raises the authority of both the author himself and the information he provides.

The considered examples indicate that when the author refers to authority, he manipulates the reader's feelings, arouses and imposes a certain emotional state on the readers. If we have the awareness of explicit and implicit ways of implementing evaluation and manipulating our thoughts and feelings in online media, we can understand the ways of influencing of the mass addressee and national consciousness as a whole.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it is necessary to underline that halo effect is one of the most common and important tools of the author's manipulative influence on the reader in the English-language political discourse.

The study of the halo effect is of interest not only for the scientists in the field of linguistics and rhetoric, but first and foremost for those who are interested in the issues of psychology, sociology and other fields of humanitarian knowledge. This research contributes to the understanding of the mechanisms and tools of manipulative influence, namely, the interaction between both the author and the addressee, the government and the society.

## Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

## Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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