

# МОВОЗНАВСТВО • LINGUISTICS

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## DISCOURSE: KNOWLEDGE, NEWS, AND FAKE INTERTWINED

Discourse has been a focal point for linguists over an extended period. The multidisciplinary character of the term 'discourse' has resulted in diverse approaches aiming to define and explore this phenomenon. The study of various facets of discourse significantly enhances its comprehension. For our understanding, discourse encompasses the following pertinent characteristics: it is a communicative process, a dialogue, an interaction between communicators; it is a structure, a system, a distinct way of representing and perceiving the world, a special language and world, an expression and manifestation of national identity.

Discourse implies knowledge, as it includes various types of it. Knowledge and news are closely linked. They are processed in discourse and with the help of it. Any explicit or implicit knowledge and news influence discourse production and comprehension. True and fake information can alter existing types of knowledge and create new ones, influence mental processes, and shape new mental models.

The aim of the article is to describe discourse in its close connection with its main constituents – knowledge, news and fake.

'Fake' becomes a linguistic and discursive matter. It is associated with the concepts of 'lie', 'deception', and 'manipulation'. Corpus data about 'fake' and 'fake news' give a bigger picture of the overall context of their representation, changes and dynamics in the usage. The widespread influence of fake is provided with the help of mass media. Strategic control of knowledge in the interaction process is achieved through the use of knowledge itself, accordingly, it becomes possible to control knowledge by means of deception and fake. Fake news is a genre of news information and news discourse, it is an integrative type of media text. The main goal of fake news is to deceive and manipulate consciousness of a wide audience. Manipulation entails language to subtly influence recipients, encouraging them covertly to undertake particular actions.

Fake news can be studied within news discourse, media discourse, television discourse, manipulative discourse, political discourse, discourse of fake, and other types.

Thus, knowledge, news and fake presented in discourse and with the help of it allow to create 'new knowledge', shape the audience's understanding of discourse, make and generate mental models, control and restrict access to certain information, manipulate consciousness of the audience, transform traditional mental attitudes associated with the pursuit of truth.

**Keywords:** discourse, fake, news, knowledge, corpus data, fake news, discourse of fake, mental models.

### Олена Грищенко. Дискурс: переплетіння знань, новин і фейку

Дискурс є центром уваги лінгвістів протягом тривалого періоду. Мультидисциплінарний характер терміну «дискурс» призвів до різноманітних підходів до визначення та дослідження цього явища. Вивчення різних аспектів дискурсу значно розширює його розуміння. Для нашого розуміння дискурс охоплює такі релевантні характеристики: дискурс – це комунікація, діалог, взаємодія між комунікантами; це процес, структура, система, окремий спосіб представлення та сприйняття світу, особлива мова та світ, вираження і прояв національної ідентичності.

Дискурс передбачає знання, оскільки включає їх різні типи. Знання та новини тісно пов'язані. Вони опрацьовуються в дискурсі та за його допомогою. Будь-які експліцитні чи імпліцитні знання та новини впливають на створення та розуміння дискурсу. Правдива та фейкова інформація можуть змінювати існуючі типи знань і створювати нові, впливати на ментальні процеси і формувати нові ментальні моделі.

Мета статті – описати дискурс у його тісному зв'язку з його основними складовими – знанням, новинами та фейком.

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‘Фейк’ стає лінгвістичним і дискурсивним питанням. Він пов’язаний з поняттями ‘неправди’, ‘обману’, ‘маніпуляції’. Дані корпусу про ‘фейк’ і ‘фейкові новини / фейк ньюз’ дають ширшу картину загального контексту їх репрезентації, змін і динаміки у використанні. Широкий вплив фейку на аудиторію забезпечується за допомогою ЗМІ. Стратегічний контроль знань у процесі комунікації відбувається за допомогою самих знань, відповідно, стає можливим контролювати знання, використовуючи обман та фейк. Фейкові новини – це жанр новинної інформації та новинного дискурсу, це інтегративний тип медіатексту. Основна мета фейкових новин – маніпулювати свідомістю широкої аудиторії, використовуючи несправжню інформацію. Маніпуляція передбачає використання мови для непомітного впливу на реципієнтів, заохочуючи їх приховано виконувати певні дії.

Фейк ньюз можливо вивчати в рамках різних типів дискурсу: дискурсу новин, медійного, телевізійного, маніпулятивного, політичного, дискурсу фейку та інших типів.

Таким чином, знання, новини та фейк, представлені в дискурсі та за допомогою нього дозволяють створювати ‘нові знання’, формувати розуміння аудиторією дискурсу, генерувати ментальні моделі, контролювати та обмежувати доступ до певної інформації, маніпулювати свідомістю аудиторії, трансформувати традиційні ментальні установки, пов’язані з прагненням до пошуку правди.

**Ключові слова:** дискурс, фейк, новини, знання, дискурс фейку, дані корпусу, фейк ньюз, ментальні моделі.

**Introduction.** Discourse has been the central focus of linguists over an extended period of time. The second half of the 20th century till the beginning of the 21st century was the time for a new research paradigm to emerge in linguistics, basic features of which are outlined in discourse analysis. The term ‘discourse’ first appeared in the article “Discourse Analysis” by Zellig Harris in 1952, a noted American scholar known for his work in structural linguistics. Z. Harris defined discourse as “sentences spoken or written in succession by one or more persons in a single situation” (Harris, 1952). In Europe, the term ‘discourse’ was used by Émile Benveniste in “General Linguistics,” published in the 1970s. The French linguist introduced the concept of a ‘simultaneous speech act’ (discourse) in which the speaker actualizes language in speech.

According to Michel Foucault’s approach, discourse is everything “written, spoken, or thought about a given social object, practice, or positioning <...> in any given historical period” (McHoul, 2006). Teun A. van Dijk, one of the founders of Critical Discourse Studies, views discourse as “a specific form of language use, and a specific form of social interaction, interpreted as a complete communicative event in a social situation” (Dijk, 1990, p. 164); as “a form of social practice, an interaction of social group members (or institutions)” (Dijk, 1993, p. 107). The linguist understands discourse as a “complex multimodal event of interaction and communication” (Dijk, 2008, p. 192); and as a “situated unit of language use” (Dijk, 2012, p. 1001). According to R. Wodak, discourse is a “form of knowledge and memory”; it is “socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned” (Wodak, 2004, p. 108–109).

Discourse becomes a multi-meaning term that is of interest not only to linguistics and its branches (semiotics, stylistics, pragmatics, etc.) but also to literary studies, sociology, cultural studies, philosophy, logic, anthropology, ethnology, rhetoric, psychology, political science, journalism, and other humanities in their fundamental and applied characteristics. The interdisciplinary nature of the concept of ‘discourse’ has led to a variety of approaches which aim to define and study this phenomenon. Various aspects of discourse study significantly broaden its understanding.

For us the following set of features for the concept of ‘discourse’ is relevant: discourse as *communication*, *dialogue* in which there is an exchange of information between participants – the addresser and the addressee; *an interaction between communicators* that includes a social context; *a process* which includes both linguistic and extralinguistic factors and which is influenced by them; *a structure* that

encompasses specific units facilitating the encoding and decoding of knowledge; discourse as *a system* which comprises various types of discursive practices; discourse as *a distinct way of representing and perceiving the world*; discourse as *a special language and world* that preserves, conveys, and transforms information using its discursive units, categories, and rules; discourse as *an expression and manifestation of national identity*.

Discourse implies knowledge, it includes different types of it. Knowledge and news are closely linked. They are processed in discourse and with the help of it. Any explicit or implicit knowledge presented in the news influences discourse production and comprehension. Truthful and fake information can influence the existing types of knowledge, create ‘new knowledge’, shape the audience’s understanding of discourse, and generate new mental models. One of the fundamental principles of mental models is based on the representations of the notions of ‘truth’ and ‘falsity’ (Johnson-Laird, 2013, p. 132). Therefore, ‘fake’ and ‘fake news’ impact on mental processes and mental models, cause cognitive changes.

The **aim of the article** is to describe and analyze discourse in its close connection with its main constituents – knowledge, news and fake.

The following methods were used to conduct this research: scientific literature review, discourse analysis, corpus analysis.

**Discourse and Knowledge.** The notions of discourse and knowledge are intricately linked. Discourse is knowledge, it does not exist without knowledge, it helps to process and share it. Discourse serves as a means to disseminate knowledge. Thus, they are interdependent. Knowledge plays a vital role in discourse production and comprehension. Different types of knowledge and types of information (news) influence the way we ‘create’ discourse and understand it (Dijk, 1993, p. 107).

All people possess various types of knowledge – “personal knowledge”, “group knowledge”, “interpersonal knowledge”, “social knowledge”, “cultural knowledge”, “common ground knowledge”, “background knowledge”, “knowledge about specific events”, “world knowledge/knowledge of the world”, “linguistic knowledge”, “specialized object knowledge”, “sociocultural knowledge”, etc. (Dijk, 2004; 2008; 2011); “a priori knowledge”, “a posteriori knowledge”, “explicit knowledge”, “tacit knowledge”, “propositional knowledge” (also “descriptive/declarative”), “non-propositional knowledge / procedural” (includes “logical, semantic, systemic, empirical” knowledge), etc. (Gilanie, 2022). These types of knowledge interact with each other, overlap, simultaneously influence one another. Knowledge is acquired through discourse. The creation of discourse and the comprehension of it is impossible without it (Dijk, 2011). Types of knowledge go together with event models, situation models, mental models (old and new), scripts (shared and non-shared), schemas, and impact the whole worldview.

**News and Fake.** News is a type of discourse (news discourse). News cannot exist without knowledge. It is “a complex interplay between known and unknown knowledge” (Dijk, 2004, p. 74). News genres primarily belong to informational genres, the purpose of which is objective reporting on an event. Modern news discourse is presented in the media (and is the media discourse), visual and auditory elements of which contribute most significantly to the promotion and existence of fake news. Various genres of contemporary news discourse have been enriched with a new genre, in our view – fake news, the essential characteristics of which will be examined in the article.

The word ‘fake’ has become an integral aspect of modern life. Its meaning carries a strictly negative connotation and is associated with the concepts of ‘lie’, ‘deception’,

and ‘manipulation’ (Gryshchenko, 2017; 2018). The concept of ‘lying’ (‘fake’) should be studied not only in terms of psychology but also linguistics (linguistic pragmatics). ‘Lying’ is “of concern to linguistics” as people tell lies using “means of language”, and lies “ruin the language” (H. Weinreich, 2005, p. 9, 35). “Truth is a linguistic question”, too (Bolinger, 1973). ‘Lying’ and ‘fake’ become linguistic and discursive matters. Understanding of these notions may vary depending on the context, individual interpretation and culture. In terms of discourse (where language is used in communication to convey meaning, shape beliefs, construct social realities and the notions are used in order to shape public opinion, influence decision-making, and frame narratives) the analysis of these terms can provide insights into broader social, political, and cultural dynamics.

Neologisms and word combinations with ‘fake’ have emerged in the media recently: *fake party, fake control, top fake, fakeup, fake depression, fake cousin, fake emergency, fakeaphobia, fakebooker, fakecitement, fakeful, faketarian, faketriotism, faketitious, fakespot, Fakesgiving, fakeluencer, fakely, fakemous, fakeout, fakepoor, fakequaintance, faketography, fakeumentary, fakevice, fakewise, fakexcited*, etc. (Urban Dictionary). Fake news on the Internet is characterized as *propagandistic, global, false, misleading, intentional, scandalous, absurd, new, dirty, anti-Ukrainian, banal, crude, frightening, shameful, concocted, absolute, staged, exposed, debunking, discrediting, terrifying, scary*, etc. Most definitions are negative. The data of the association test show that the stimulus ‘fake’ has the following reactions: *deceitful, counterfeited, fabricated, unreal, deceptive, low-quality, unreliable, fictitious, artificial, phony, suspicious, media, hidden, cheap, unreal, insidious, complicated, dishonest, doubtful, erroneous, provocative, cowardly, defective, evil, sordid, shameful, disgusting, illusive, dangerous, worthless, illegal, cynical, ambiguous*, etc. However, sometimes it is referred to as *bright, famous, modern, popular, appealing, public, mysterious* – adjectives with neutral and positive connotation (Gryshchenko, 2018, p. 82).

Corpus-based analysis helps to understand the overall context of representation of ‘fake’. In corpus data (enTenTen, the English Web Corpus, 2020) lemma ‘fake’ (used 805,538 times) has a number of collocations. Its collocates are: *genuine, actual, false, weird, real, silly, ugly, bogus, stupid, ridiculous, substandard, stolen, alleged, fraudulent, bogus, malicious, contrived, blank, insincere, obvious, shoddy, exaggerated, explosive, altered, artificial, forced, Russian, obvious, viral, convincing, indistinguishable, sick, prevalent, easy, common, worthless, human-made, well-made, non-disclosed*, etc. The adjective ‘fake’ collocates with such modifiers as *laughably, patently, transparently, obviously, blatantly, hilariously, ridiculously, totally, outrageously, demonstrably, convincingly, annoyingly, glaringly, horribly, utterly, embarrassingly, absurdly, completely, allegedly, authentically, outright, presumably, painfully, unbelievably, admittedly, overtly, noticeably, entirely, intentionally, incredibly, visibly*, which still support negative meaning and attitude (enTenTen, Corpus of the English Web, 2020).

Statistical analysis of some social factors of language use – change over time, gender, age, social class, region, speech and writing – is essential, too. It allows to get frequency information and to compare data of two corpora (for example, BNC 1994 and BNC 2014). The search for ‘fake’ in BNC lab found 128 results (9.35 per million) in speech and 61 results (21.85 per million) in writing. More frequent usage is registered in BNC 2014 – 0.20 (120 results) comparing with 0.03 (8 examples) in BNC 1994. Not only the overall usage of the word increased, but also the usage of both male and female users: male usage – from 3 results in 1994 to 5 in 2014, female usage – from 39 examples in 1994 to 81 in 2014. According to the data, women tend to use it more often.

'Fake' is frequently used by the age group of people who are between 20 and 40 years old. Within social groups of working class, middle class, students, retired and unknown) students manifest the most common use both in 1994 and 2014 whereas retired people use it occasionally. The usage varies even depending on the region (BNC lab). The data show the changes and dynamics in the usage of 'fake' which gives insight into its essence and allows to study its transformations.

Different websites and platforms are engaged in making fake, creating fake news and fake information (Faking News). There are also those that combat it and help to recognize it (Stopfake.org). We have identified three types of fake information that circulate on websites on the Internet and on television: 1) fake on sites openly declaring that they present fake information (the purpose of this kind of fake is to engage and entertain the audience); 2) fake on Internet sites that forge pages of real users (performers, artists, politicians), using their personal information to create fake with the aim to mislead recipients; 3) fake in the media (on the Internet, on television and radio), predominantly news and political discourse. The main function of any kind of fake is manipulative, i.e., the intentional influence on the consciousness of the audience that loses the ability to distinguish truth from fake and finds itself in a subordinate position to the manipulator.

Fake news is a type of media text. It is the information which is based on untrue facts, created with the intention to deceive and manipulate. The widespread influence of fake is provided with the help of mass media. Media texts include journalistic texts, PR texts, publicistic texts, newspaper texts, TV and radio texts, advertising texts, and Internet media texts. Media text is a creolized, polycode, and integrative text with verbal, visual, auditory, and audio-visual components. R. Wodak defines media texts as 'dialogic' and 'interactive' texts which 'depend on intertextual relations with many other genres'. Media "produce and reproduce social meanings" (Wodak, 2004, p. 106). The main categories of media text – mediality, mass character, openness, etc. – serve as a breeding ground for fake news which represents a distinct type of media text with a dominant function – manipulative influence.

In corpus data 'fake news' is characterized as *rampant, prevalent, rife, online, dangerous, real, new, bad, downright*. Nouns modified by 'fake news' are *disinformation, post-truth, misinformation, clickbait, cyberbullying, WhatsApp, hoax, propaganda, populism, meddling, bot, troll, rumor, interference, conspiracy, journalism, privacy, manipulation, lies*, etc. (enTenTen, Corpus of the English Web, 2020). "Fake news" collocates with '*potential myths, political disinformation, misinformation, untruthful remarks, meme, Brexit, media, campaign, post-truth, conspiracy theories, information bubbles, ever-growing problem, perpetrating, social media, coronavirus, potentially abused, spread*, etc. It gets 219 hits in 69 texts. (Brezina & Platt, BNC 2014, 2023). The data from corpora illustrate the significance of the concept in contemporary life, its widespread usage in diverse fields, and its connection with the media.

**Discourse, Media and Fake News.** Discourse is based on knowledge, and knowledge is based on the truth as it includes real events and facts. Knowledge may be based on misconception (including subjective perception of the world around) but news should rely solely on the truth. Objective knowledge is the truth. Therefore, the oppositional model (conceptual opposition) 'truth / knowledge – lies' is always interconnected because lie is the concealment of truth, while truth is knowledge and the opposite of lies. Truth is always "associated with knowledge – and not with belief" (Dijk, 2011, p. 56). However, modern news discourse is often founded on fake, lies and deception.

Intentional and elaborate lies ('fake') contradict the principles of journalistic ethics which are based on international norms: the right of people to receive accurate, truthful information; the social responsibility of the journalist and their professional integrity. Every journalist should write the truth, support statements with facts that cannot do harm to anyone; work on the search for truth when writing an article or creating a report. Therefore, by offering deliberately misleading information, a journalist not only fails to adhere to existing journalistic methods of representing reality (factual, analytical, and illustrative), as this method of presenting information does not correspond to any of the aforementioned approaches, but also grossly violates the principles of journalistic ethics.

According to T. van Dijk, in the process of interaction, there is a mutual control of knowledge by communicants. This control is necessary for presenting explicit and implicit information, for shaping definite knowledge (existing and acquired) and for forming contextual and mental models. The formation of a contextual model occurs when knowledge is activated, expressed in some way, assumed, recalled, repeated, etc. In the framework of the contextual model, new information is evaluated, compared with existing knowledge stored in mental models. It is processed within the acquired knowledge and is ready to create 'new knowledge'. Discourse helps to control it, to determine which knowledge should be presented as 'new', and which can be assumed or accepted as commonly known and left implicit, and what knowledge, about particularly recent events, might be familiar but requires the speaker to remind the audience to "re-activate event models of the recipients" (Dijk, 2011, p. 41). Accordingly, if there is a strategic control of knowledge in the interaction process using the knowledge itself, then it becomes possible to control it by means of deception and fake. Lies presented initially as objective knowledge in fake news, create some 'new knowledge' for the audience; and when they are reiterated, as well as with new lies, they allow to maintain and control the knowledge of the same audience.

News events, based on mental models, are capable of interpreting events and thereby shaping and forming mental models. As a result, knowledge control and management are carried out. Manipulative possibilities and means within political and television discourses enhance such control and management. Liars (fake-makers) use power in order to control the media, discourse, news, the amount of knowledge and access to it. Access is "a major element in the discursive reproduction of power and dominance" (Dijk, 1995, p. 85). Thus, discourse serves as a means of conveying information. It also helps to shape knowledge, to reveal or restrict information, and hence to dominate or subjugate the listener / the reader.

Lies become a means of exercising power which allows to control discourse (social and public), redirect the audience's attention to 'new knowledge' – fake / false information, typically sensational and absurd which restricts access to more important information or even absolutely closes it. Moreover, the concept of 'lying' has been significantly transformed. It is not only presented as truth and reality but is also interpreted through new attributes such as 'news', 'television', 'fear', 'advertisement', 'health', 'country' and so on.

The main goal of fake news is to deceive and manipulate consciousness of a wide audience. Manipulation entails language to subtly influence recipients, encouraging them implicitly and covertly to undertake particular actions. This involves hidden introduction of desires, relationships, and attitudes into their consciousness which serve the interests of the message sender and may not necessarily align with the interests of the recipients. Manipulation of consciousness through fake news in political, news and television discourse is a complex phenomenon. It involves linguistic (verbal),

communicative, psychological, and integrative (visual and auditory) influence on the recipient. In the context of information warfare this manipulation intensifies, and fake news becomes a weapon to achieve specific goals. The use of language and speech is crucial in this context as it is primarily conducted with the help of language and speech. The impact is aimed explicitly or implicitly at both rational and unconscious perception.

Manipulative impact of fake news is a combined influence – both open (conscious and deliberate) and hidden. The scale and accessibility of the impact are significant. Media capabilities allow to encode specific information, restrict or close access to certain knowledge; to develop behavioral technologies in order to modify the recipients' consciousness, to reduce their psychological defense mechanisms and to weaken conscious control; to destroy the existent concepts, images and beliefs. Psychological defense mechanisms weaken or even absolutely disappear when a person is frightened. Manipulation of fake / false information in the context of fear is most effective and efficient. It influences the conceptual worldview. Some concepts are transformed and altered, they lose or gain significance, others become topical and important, such as 'lies', 'deceit', 'war', 'fear', 'freedom', etc.)

**Conclusions and Perspectives.** Discourse should be studied in close connection with its main constituents – knowledge, news and fake. Discourse contains knowledge, and the latter is based on the truth. However, fake information can be imparted through discourse, too. 'Fake' is spread through different types of discourse, namely media, news, television, political, manipulative, discourse of fake, and other types. The concept of 'fake' is modified, transformed, and incredibly amplified, it intrudes into all spheres of life.

Discourse is used in order to control knowledge. This strategic control of knowledge can be maintained by means of deception and fake. As discourse is everything that is "written, spoken, and thought in a specific historical period", and a lot nowadays is written, spoken, thought, and presented in the format of fake, there are all grounds for a systematic analysis of these specific phenomena – fake news and discourse of fake.

Fake news is a genre of news information and news discourse, it is an integrative type of media text. Its primary functions (informative, expressive, and communicative) focus on the comprehensive impact on the audience (linguistic, communicative, psychological, etc.) and manipulation of its consciousness. The key components of fake news (lies, deception, and manipulation) contribute to the formation of specific mental models and to the transformation of traditional mental attitudes associated with the pursuit of truth. Through discourse with the help of knowledge and fake, it is possible to control and restrict recipients, push them towards certain thoughts and actions.

The study of 'lying' and 'fake' from linguistic and discursive perspectives gives insight into their usage, implications, and impact on communication and society.

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