

Matzhanova Gulvira Zhusupovna^{*1}

Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor, West Kazakhstan Innovation and Technological University, Uralsk, Kazakhstan, gulvira.matzhanova@gmail.com,
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0579-6904

PERSUASION AS A PRAGMATIC CATEGORY IN BUSINESS ENGLISH DISCOURSE

Abstract. The aim of the paper is to identify the influence of persuasion strategies, which are a category of pragmatics, in business English discourse. The research focuses on identifying the linguistic mechanisms through which persuasion is realized in business communication. The study analyzes persuasive language at phonetic, lexical, and syntactic levels in business discourse.

The research methodology includes descriptive, explanatory, comparative, componential, and statistical analyses. The corpus consists of business texts produced by leading multinational corporations. The findings demonstrate that persuasion in business communication is achieved through a wide range of linguistic devices functioning across different language levels.

The study contributes to the development of pragmatics and business discourse studies in the Kazakh academic context by identifying the theoretical foundations and functional characteristics of persuasion in English business communication. The findings may be applied in Business English instruction, persuasive writing courses, intercultural communication, stylistics, rhetoric, and the development of communicative competence among EFL learners and business professionals.

The paper concludes that persuasion in business discourse represents a complex linguistic strategies which are systematically employed to influence audience perception and behavior.

Key words. Persuasion, pragmatics, business discourse, business communication, linguistic influence

Матжанова Гульвира Жусуповна^{*1}

Филология ғылымдарының кандидаты, қауымдастырылған профессор, Батыс Қазақстан инновациялық – технологиялық университеті, Орал, Қазақстан,
gulvira.matzhanova@gmail.com, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0579-6904

ІСКЕРЛІК АҒЫЛШЫН ТІЛІНІҢ ДИСКУРСЫНДАҒЫ СЕНДІРУ ПРАГМАТИКАНЫҢ КАТЕГОРИЯСЫ РЕТІНДЕ

Аңдатпа. Мақаланың мақсаты – іскерлік ағылшын дискурсындағы тіл арқылы прагматика санаты болып табылатын сендіру стратегияларының ықпалын анықтау.

Зерттеу жұмысы іскерлік қарым-қатынаста сендірудің жүзеге асырылуының тілдік механизмдерін анықтауға бағытталған. Мақалада іскерлік дискурсындағы сендіру категориясы фонетикалық, лексикалық және синтаксистік деңгейлерде талданады.

Зерттеу әдіснамасына сипаттамалық, түсіндірмелік, салыстырмалы, компоненттік және статистикалық талдаулар кіреді. Зерттеу нысанын көпұлтты компаниялардың іскерлік мәтіндері құрайды. Ғылыми жұмыстың нәтижелері іскерлік қарым-қатынастағы сендіруге әртүрлі тілдік деңгейлерде жұмыс істейтін кең ауқымды тілдік құралдар арқылы жүзеге асырылатынын дәлелдейді.

Зерттеу ағылшын іскерлік қарым-қатынасындағы сендірудің теориялық негіздері мен функционалдық сипаттамаларын анықтау арқылы қазақ академиялық контекстінде прагматика мен іскерлік дискурс зерттеулерінің дамуына үлес қосады. Мақаладағы зерттеу нәтижелері іскерлік ағылшын тілін оқытуда, академиялық сендіретін жазу курстарында, мәдениетаралық қарым-қатынаста, стилистикада, риторикада және ағылшын тілін үйренетін студенттер мен бизнес мамандарының коммуникативтік құзыреттіліктерін дамытуда практикалық тұрғыдан қолданылуы мүмкін.

Мақалада іскерлік дискурстағы сендіру аудиторияның қабылдауы мен мінез-құлқына әсер ету үшін жүйелі түрде қолданылатын күрделі лингвистикалық стратегиялар болып табылады деген қорытынды жасалады.

Кілт сөздер. Сендіру, прагматика, іскерлік дискурс, іскерлік коммуникация, тілдік ықпал

Матжанова Гульвира Жусуповна^{*1}

Кандидат филологических наук, ассоциированный профессор, Западно-Казахстанский инновационно-технологический университет, Уральск, Казахстан,
gulvira.matzhanova@gmail.com, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0579-6904

УБЕЖДЕНИЕ КАК ПРАГМАТИЧЕСКАЯ КАТЕГОРИЯ В ДЕЛОВОМ АНГЛИЙСКОМ ДИСКУРСЕ

Аннотация. Цель данной работы – выявить специфику реализации стратегий убеждения как категории прагматики в английском деловом дискурсе. Исследование сосредоточено на выявлении лингвистических механизмов, посредством которых реализуется убеждение в деловой коммуникации. В исследовании анализируется язык убеждения на фонетическом, лексическом и синтаксическом уровнях в деловом дискурсе.

Методология исследования включает описательный, объяснительный, сравнительный, компонентный и статистический анализы. Объект исследования состоит из деловых текстов, созданных ведущими многонациональными корпорациями. Результаты исследования показывают, что убеждение в деловом дискурсе достигается с помощью широкого спектра лингвистических средств, функционирующих на разных языковых уровнях.

Исследование вносит вклад в развитие прагматики и исследований делового дискурса в казахском академическом контексте, выявляя теоретические основы и функциональные характеристики убеждения в деловой коммуникации. Полученные результаты могут быть применены в преподавании делового английского языка, курсах убедительного письма, межкультурной коммуникации, стилистике, риторике, а также в развитии коммуникативной компетенции среди изучающих английский как иностранный язык и специалистов в сфере бизнеса.

В заключение статьи делается вывод, что убеждение в деловом дискурсе представляет собой сложную лингвистическую стратегию, которая систематически используется для влияния на восприятие и поведение аудитории.

Ключевые слова. Убеждение, прагматика, деловой дискурс, деловая коммуникация, лингвистическое влияние

Introduction. The transition to a market-oriented economy has significantly influenced

political, social, cultural, educational, and linguistic developments in Kazakhstan. Among contemporary linguistic issues, business communication has become particularly important due to its role in shaping professional interaction and communicative competence. While literary language traditionally occupied a dominant position in linguistic studies, modern scholarship increasingly prioritizes business communication, media discourse, and information exchange as central functions of language [1 p. 4].

The theoretical investigation of business discourse requires an examination of the pragmatic functions of language, particularly information transmission and audience influence. Business communication not only conveys information but also shapes the recipient's interpretation and response. Therefore, business discourse inherently possesses a pragmatic dimension.

Pragmatics has been widely examined by scholars such as Charles Morris, J. Austin, J. Searle, Yu. S. Stepanov, G. V. Kolshansky, N. D. Arutyunova, and others, alongside Kazakh researchers including R. Syzdykova, B. Shalabai, and Z. Ernazarova. Unlike structural approaches to language, pragmatics focuses on the interaction between communicative participants and the intentions underlying speech.

L. A. Kiseleva argues that language serves two primary communicative purposes: the transmission of information and the influence on human consciousness and behavior. Such influence may manifest in the form of persuasion, suggestion, or command. Consequently, pragmatic communication extends beyond information exchange to include the establishment of interpersonal relations and the achievement of communicative goals [2, p.101].

Roman Jakobson classified language functions into several categories, including emotive, communicative, rhetorical, metalinguistic, cognitive, and aesthetic functions [3, p.24]. These classifications demonstrate the multidimensional nature of language in communication.

Pragmatics is closely connected with disciplines such as stylistics, rhetoric, psycholinguistics, cognitive linguistics, and sociolinguistics. Aristotle identified persuasion as the principal objective of rhetoric and described it as the ability to convince audiences to accept specific ideas [4:6]. However, whereas rhetoric primarily concerns eloquence and speech techniques, pragmatics emphasizes communicative intention and the recipient's response.

The growing significance of linguistic influence in contemporary society is associated with several factors:

- the expansion of mass media and digital communication;
- the increasing impact of advertising and propaganda;
- intensified ideological competition within society;
- the role of language in shaping social culture and education.

Speech activity plays a central role in persuasive communication because language influence is realized through speech acts. Communication enables individuals to affect one another's attitudes and actions. Speech act theory, developed by Austin, Searle, and Grice, among others, A. V. Vezhbitska, G. O. Pocheptsov, Y. D. Apresyan, Z. Sh. Ernazarova, I. Nurgozhina, Z. Kh. Ibdaldinova, who provides a theoretical basis for understanding persuasive interaction.

Within pragmatics, persuasion may be viewed as a perlocutionary act intended to alter beliefs, attitudes, or behavior through language. Persuasive discourse frequently employs requests, recommendations, suggestions, clarifications, and rhetorical questions.

Emotional vocabulary also contributes significantly to persuasion. Positively connoted lexical units strengthen interpersonal trust and shape audience perception. Expressions such as "Let's make America strong again" or "The best that money can buy" illustrate how evaluative language influences emotional responses and audience attitudes [5, p.73].

Materials and methods of research. The research corpus consists of 150 business texts

collected from official materials produced by internationally recognized multinational corporations including ChevronTexaco, ExxonMobil, Microsoft, General Motors, General Electric, Kraft Foods, and Procter & Gamble. Statistical analysis was conducted on 50 selected texts comprising approximately 1,500 linguistic units.

The study employed descriptive, explanatory, componential, and statistical methods to identify persuasive techniques and determine their frequency and communicative functions. Persuasive influence in business discourse operates at multiple linguistic levels:

✓ Phonetic level: alliteration, rhythm, assonance, anaphora, and epiphora contribute to melodic and memorable speech patterns.

✓ Lexical level: metaphor, metonymy, evaluative vocabulary, and emotionally charged expressions influence audience perception.

✓ Syntactic level: repetition, parallel constructions, rhetorical questions, and inversion strengthen emphasis and improve memorability.

The influence of spoken language covers all levels of the language: phonetic, lexical, syntactic. Among phonetic methods, phonetic phenomena such as alliteration, assonance, anaphora, and epiphora are often encountered, and their melodious and rhythmic pronunciation through intonation has an effect on the addressee [6, p.12]. Influence on the listener's consciousness and feelings at the lexical level is carried out with the help of words and lexical devices, the main tool of language. According to D. Bollinger, by using a variety of words and specific examples, one can influence the consciousness of a person and achieve the intended goal [7, pp. 214-215].

Repetition was identified as one of the most effective persuasive strategies because it reinforces key ideas and facilitates audience comprehension and retention. Parallel constructions also provide logical emphasis and rhetorical coherence.

For example: “How are we going to get there? How are we going to perform, day after day, to become the undisputed leaders of the food industry?” (www.northersternmutual.com)

“My suggestion is to start with the six benefits I listed earlier. They should provide a valuable framework to guide your thinking. Take a look at your marketing messages and at how you're delivering them today. Then ask yourself six questions:

1. How can I make my message global?
2. How can I offer such useful and interesting content that consumers will come back to my site again and again?
3. How can I make it interactive?
4. How can I fully integrate the full range of marketing disciplines into the delivery of my message?
5. How can I make my message more compelling by using the net's one-to-one capability?
6. How can I use this technology to sell my products?

I think you'll find that the answers to these questions will provide a creative blueprint as you think about how to tap the full potential of the net.” (www.corning.com)

“Do you really want to go to a similar position at another large company? Maybe this is an opportunity to change your work style – go into business you're yourself. Maybe this is the chance to do what you're always wanted to do and move to Alaska.” (www.pricewaterhouse.com)

“This kind of shift in the way we interact with technology will do more than any single invention to give us higher productivity, greater power, and better peace of mind.” (www.corning.com)

“Computers move calls across town--across the country – and across the world – not only through copper wires – but increasingly on laser-beams of light-through hair-thin strands of

glass called "optical fiber." (www.generalelectric.com)

"Suppliers will lose customers and consumers will lose choices." (www.batelle.com)
From these examples, it can be seen that business texts use repetitions at various linguistic levels: phonetic, lexical, syntactic, and other linguistic methods that affect the listener's consciousness. eager to stay, but ready to go, alliteration: by your talk, but by your walk, from good to great, from better to best, from world-class to most admired, chiasm: suppliers will lose customers and consumers will lose choices, census higher productivity, greater power, and better peace of mind and speech acts based on the performative form of speech acts, interrogative sentences, rhetorical questions, and promises are used to embellish the text, make it more expressive, and influence the addressee's consciousness.

For example: "Marketers who understand the implications and get ahead of the curve will not only survive, they'll thrive." (www.procterandgamble.com) Parallel constructions within a sentence are used to prove a point. In this regard, N.M. Razinkina writes that syntactic parallelisms are a way to prove the author's point [8, p.143]. The following examples can serve as evidence of this opinion.

"We're already the largest, and we're already the leader in financial performance. And now we have the opportunity, and, with all the work we've done over the past few years to merge several great companies into one, we've earned the right--to break away from the pack... to become undisputed leaders... to make "Kraft" mean to food and beverages...

what Nike means to athletic apparel...

what McDonald's means to fast food...

what Wal-Mart means to retailing...

what Microsoft means to software...

what Philip Morris means to tobacco...

what Crayola means to crayons...

and what Hallmark means to greeting cards." (www.kraftfood.com)

Stylistic devices such as metaphor and metonymy were found to possess strong pragmatic potential. Metaphorical language enhances emotional resonance, while metonymic expressions demonstrate linguistic sophistication and strengthen speaker credibility. For example: "Although our timing was off, our credibility with employees is now back to whatever is the normal level of senior management's believability among that stakeholder group. And we now have some concrete successes to point to when we talk about development with folks outside the U.S., including those in Rotterdam." (www.crysler.com) If the use of the words timing was off, folks in this example ensures the establishment of a "warm" relationship with the addressee, parallel constructions such as our credibility, management's believability allow the idea to be retained in the listener's memory for a long time.

The study also examined commissive speech acts, including promises and commitments, which establish trust and responsibility between speakers and audiences. For example: "In the years ahead, how we use outside R&D resources and how we maximize the return on our technology investments will be more and more critical to our operations. That's because there really is only one prediction that I can guarantee: Technology will continue to transform industry, and we'll all have to keep up with it if we want to succeed." (www.pasificgasandelectric.com)

The influence on the addressee is also reflected in the speaker's personal style. In this regard, the following opinion of V.V. Vinogradov is perhaps most appropriate: "Style, as a system of means of expressing thought, includes all elements of the language structure: sounds, grammatical figures, vocabulary, phraseological units, and the methods of compositional and syntactic construction of these areas" [9, p.34].

"By the start of the 1900s, the Industrial Revolution had changed all that. The body and

the soul of America were transformed. Millions of workers and their families migrated to our shores – attracted by the opportunity of jobs. Jobs will be protected, borders will be closed, and we'll be back in the Economic Dark Ages.” (www.corning.com) In this example, Corning CEO James Houghton describes the US economy, the social situation of which is comparable to the body and soul, and the five-year economic stagnation (G.M. – Great Depression) in US history as the equivalent of the Economic Dark Ages.

“Information managers got better and the equipment cycles shortened, but information technology in a business was still the province of the "IM function" – still a chimney outside the mainstream of business activity run by a "priesthood" with its own language and rituals.” (www.mcdonneldouglas.com)

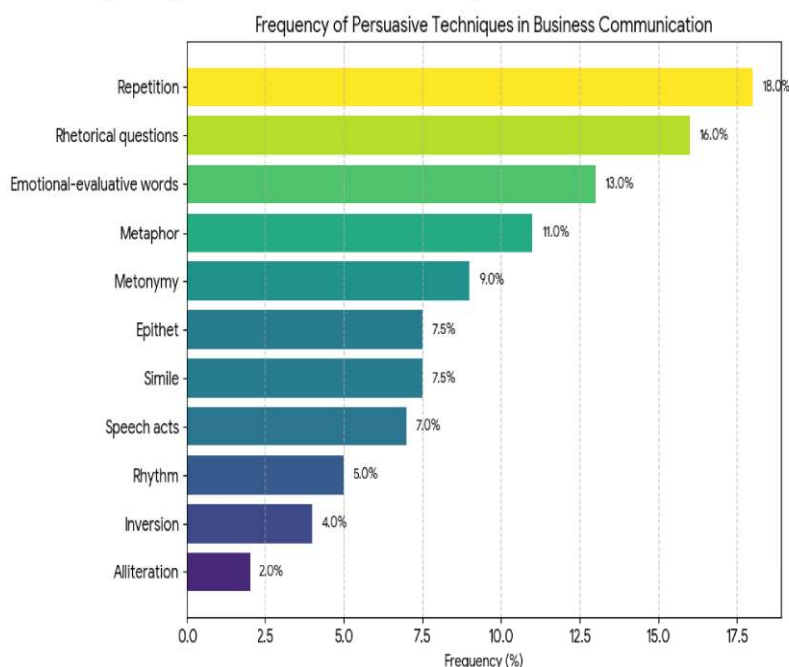
Results and discussion. The findings indicate that business communication extends beyond the simple transmission of information and actively seeks to shape audience attitudes and responses. Business discourse combines features of formal, journalistic, and conversational styles, creating persuasive and accessible communication.

The analysis demonstrated that persuasive strategies function across all language levels. Among the most frequently used persuasive devices were: repetitions, parallel constructions, rhetorical questions, evaluative vocabulary, metaphor, metonymy, alliteration, rhythm, inversion.

Speech acts based on performative structures, including promises, requests, greetings, and suggestions, were identified as significant tools of perlocutionary influence.

Statistical analysis revealed the following frequency distribution of persuasive techniques in business discourse: (Table №1)

Table 1 – Frequency of Persuasive Techniques in Business Communication




The data indicate that repetition and rhetorical questions are among the most dominant persuasive mechanisms in business texts. Repetition enhances expressiveness and emphasizes central ideas, while rhetorical questions stimulate audience engagement and reflection.

Sound harmony achieved through rhythm and alliteration also contributes to persuasive effectiveness by improving the aesthetic quality and memorability of speech.

The findings further demonstrate the close relationship between pragmatics and stylistics. While stylistics focuses on artistic and expressive features of language, pragmatics emphasizes

communicative intention and persuasive impact. (Table №2)

Table 2 – Use of repetition in business texts

	<p>Even though employees <u>will have to take</u> a much more proactive role in their own careers through constant renewal and life-long education, this does not lessen the organization's role. <u>Companies will have to apply</u> resources to deal with stress. Leaders will need to be sensitive and sympathetic, and help their people through it. <u>Companies will also have to show responsiveness to employees' needs outside the workplace.</u></p> <p><u>Yes, you have to be</u> a strategic thinker. <u>Yes, yu have to use</u> your intelligence and experience to make good judgments. <u>Yes, you have to think</u> always of the vision and communicate it in a way that people will understand. But in addition to conceptualizing, deliberating, and communicating, <u>you must be swift</u> to action.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Repetition</p> 
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Summarizing the results of the findings, it should be pointed out that the degree of persuasion covers all areas of the language level: phonetic, lexical, syntactic. It was found that in business texts, the most powerful means of influence are the repetition of sounds, words, sentences, parallel constructions, proverbs and idioms, evaluative words, as well as some stylistic devices: alliteration, rhythm, metaphor, metonymy, epithet, simile, inversion.

Conclusion. The study confirms that persuasion functions as an essential pragmatic category in English business discourse. Persuasive communication seeks to influence audience attitudes, encourage acceptance of ideas, and motivate action through carefully selected linguistic strategies.

The research identified dominant persuasive techniques at different language levels:

Phonetic level: rhythm and alliteration;

Lexical level: evaluative vocabulary, metaphor, metonymy, epithet, simile, and repetition;

Syntactic level: rhetorical questions, parallel constructions, and inversion.

The findings demonstrate that persuasion in business discourse is a multidimensional phenomenon integrating logical, ethical, emotional, and stylistic elements.

Given the global role of English as the primary language of international business communication, the development of persuasive business writing skills is increasingly important for Kazakhstan's integration into global economic and professional environments. The training of effective business communicators, speechwriters, and public speakers capable of producing persuasive English business texts therefore remains a highly relevant educational and professional objective.

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