

**Hopkinson, C., Sedlářová, L., Tomášková, R., Wilamová, S. and Zapletalová, G. (2009) *Communication Strategies in Text and Talk*. Ostrava: Filozofická fakulta Ostravské univerzity v Ostravě. 293 pp.**

Produced as part of the Czech Science Foundation (GAČR) grant project *Komunikativní a textové strategie v rozhlasové, časopisecké, komerční a akademické publicistice (kontrastivní analýza anglického a českého diskurzu) – Communication and textual strategies in radio, magazine, commercial and academic texts (a contrastive analysis of English and Czech discourse)*, this monograph consists of five studies unified by the concept of communication strategies in English and Czech discourse.

The term ‘strategy’ is conceived in its broad sense, as a tool to reach a certain goal; this is in accordance with Enkvist’s (1987) conception of the term, which is repeatedly referred to throughout the monograph. Such a concept of strategy proved fruitful as the authors’ analyses are not restricted by any specific linguistic phenomena. Attention is therefore devoted to various features of spoken as well as written discourse that help an individual achieve his or her goal in the process of communication. The description of communication is not the only focal point of the studies; the authors also succeed in pointing out which strategies are limited to one of the cultures under investigation – English-speaking cultures or Czech culture – and which appear to be more universally applied. Adhering to the concepts of centre and periphery when investigating communication strategies, the authors pay tribute to the late Professor Aleš Svoboda – who was the original head of the research project and to whom the publication is dedicated.

Since the material used for the analyses is entirely based on media discourse, it is not surprising that individual chapters make reference to a number of scientific disciplines. The interdisciplinary character of the monograph is perceptible in the variety of approaches and methodologies from the viewpoint of which the functioning of communication strategies is described: purely linguistic branches such as text linguistics, speech act theory, conversation analysis or discourse analysis are complemented by semiotics, pragmatics, sociology, psychology, neurology or philosophy. At the same time, all the studies are interconnected by Halliday’s (1978) concept of language as social semiotic, consisting of the ideational (field), interpersonal (tenor), and textual (mode) components of language. By analogy, and in a broader sense, also the content, goal and the communication strategy of the whole monograph is fully in compliance with Halliday and Hasan’s (1985) approach to individual language components, i.e. the communication strategies identified are perceived from the viewpoint of

various approaches and methodologies, perspectives and standpoints, mutually interconnected and hierarchically arranged.

The monograph consists of two main parts dealing with written and spoken discourse respectively. Both parts mutually complement each other. The content of the individual studies ranges from a more complex and overall description covering various linguistic features and their relation to the communication strategies employed, to a more specific account of one communication strategy exceeding the boundaries of language, yet drawing on the principles of communication. This structure fully complies with the authors' aim "to capture the way in which communication strategies operate in the all-embracing context of their 'core' interpersonal function" (p. 11). The authors have not teamed up purely for the purpose of working on the above-mentioned grant project in the light of their common interest in the functioning of communication strategies; they are also colleagues at the same workplace – the Department of English and American studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ostrava.

The first study of Part I (Chapter Two), written by Christopher Hopkinson, focuses on a contrastive study of British and Czech commercial media texts. Like the other studies in the volume, this contribution deals with the persuasive function of communication strategies – which is clearly identified as the most visible function in the discourse of commercial websites. Hopkinson's corpus consists of commercial texts from the sphere of the food and drink industry. This area of research, i.e. research into commercial media texts, not advertising proper, remains relatively unexplored, which gives Hopkinson's study a more profound meaning. Drawing on the methodology of Van Dijk's 'triangulation framework' (2006), Hopkinson makes use of the three crucial elements – society, cognition and discourse – and demonstrates the operation of strategies themselves as well as the cross-cultural differences in preferred strategies.

The following study (Chapter Three), by Renáta Tomášková, focuses on the language of the mass media, particularly the discourse of women's and men's lifestyle magazines in Czech and English. Apart from the already mentioned underlying methodology based on Halliday and Hasan's functional approach to language and discourse, Tomášková also borrows from Fairclough's (1995, 2003) and Van Dijk's (2001; 2006) approach to issues of relevance to mass media texts. The strategies employed to reach common goals – goals identified in all of the magazines subjected to analysis – are manifold and, as Tomášková shows, also gender-conditioned.

Gabriela Zapletalová is the author of the third study – the last within Part I of the volume (Chapter Four). This chapter reports on the communication strategies employed in academic research articles – texts which are particularly bound by

strict rules and principles of their production and delivery to the target reader. Among a wide range of communication strategies operating in such a text type, Zapletalová delimits the area of her research into two spheres: firstly the use of personal pronouns, and secondly the lexis chosen in order to support and develop the argumentation and realization of writer identity. Both parts reveal the author's extensive knowledge of relevant literature and the background of deictic semantics and lexical cohesion, which are subsequently deployed as a theoretical basis for the analysis.

Part II draws the reader's attention to relatively unexplored areas of communication strategies within spoken discourse. The first study in Part II (Chapter Five), written by Lenka Sedlářová, offers a detailed analysis of communication strategies manifested by hand gestures as presented in an American feature film. Nonverbal communication still appears to be overlooked by mainstream linguistics. Sedlářová's study, however, surely deserves more attention as it proposes fresh and new perspectives on this area of research, while not underestimating the importance of the verbal aspect within the analysis. Sedlářová adeptly supplements her research by including a contrastive insight into the use of hand gestures in the United States and Central Europe, drawing predominantly on Škvareninová's (2004) findings.

Similarly to the previous study, the one which concludes the volume (Chapter Six), by Sirma Wilamová, also presents an area of research which remains yet to be further explored. Wilamová aims to promote and report on linguistic non-violence in the language of media communication. Influenced particularly by her research stay in Hawaii and drawing on data obtained from Czech, British and North American radio discussions, Wilamová believes that the concept of the win-win strategy is applicable to any form of media language. Moreover, emphasizing the interdisciplinary character of the research (particularly the overlaps with sociology and psychology), she also demonstrates how to achieve this goal.

The aim of the grant project from which this monograph stems was to analyze communication strategies employed to reach certain communicative goals. This aim is addressed and achieved in this volume. Communication strategies are approached from various perspectives and applied to a number of linguistic research areas, often going beyond the sphere of language as such. All of the studies are interrelated by Halliday's concept of language as social semiotic, and they also include Czech-English contrastive analyses. The authors demonstrate an extensive scope of knowledge within the areas they have discussed; therefore I cannot but assure them in their hope that this publication will most certainly serve not only as a source of inspiration but also as a source of in-depth knowledge

exploitable by scholars, students and also others interested in the complexity of language functions.

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