



LINGUA-PRAGMATIC NATURE OF PERIPHRAISIS IN MODERN ENGLISH MEDIA DISCOURSE.

Vafoyeva Mahbuba Rustam qizi

Master of Asia International University

Introduction. In modern English, there is an emerging feature of periphrasis, that is to say expressing meaning in multi-word forms as opposed to by inflection or single word forms. This linguistic phenomenon is not only a grammatical variation but also a powerful pragmatic technique in communication, especially in media discourse. When it comes to media discourse, a strategically oriented, public language, it uses periphrasis in order to control tone, add nuance and satisfy a set of communicative functions of politeness, emphasis, vagueness, or evasion.

According to Biber (1999) English as an analytic language naturally leads to periphrastic, i.e. multiword expressions, many of which contain auxiliaries (e.g., be, have, will) like “has been working” or “will be arriving”. These do not simply encode T, A and M, but can also articulate stance and attitude:

As Halliday (1994) points out, language mirrors the concepts accomplishing it in its social roles. In the service of the aims to inform, persuade or entertain, media discourse often has recourse to periphrasis to remain objective, to soften an assertion, or to distance the speaker strategically from a claim. Accordingly, being able to detect periphrasis in the media is crucial for understanding how language influences public interpretation and debate.


Methods. The present study is based on a qualitative descriptive analysis of periphrastic constructions in English print media. The main corpus consists of 50 texts from major world English language media such as BBC, CNN, The Guardian, The New York Times published in 2020-2024.

For each interpretation, the use of periphrastic constructions was analyzed, focusing particularly on verb forms and communicative effects. Examples include:

Modal expressions (might have been, could possibly be),

Combinations with the passive and with the progressive (is being investigated, has been considered),

Inside the bustle of the city, all kinds of sounds fill the air, which interfere with each other like vying musicians. The brilliant neon lights of colossally tall buildings pierce the night sky. This bizarre glow blankets the city below them. A numbing crowd for pedestrian movement. In fire crackerlike succession, the smell of grilling food on street side mixes with the fumes of gaseous states. This all is a sort of



overdosage from aroma saffron that lingers plenty long afterwards. For all this mayhem, there's an unmistakable vitality that flows through the city. It's a relentless heartbeat that pushes things into night.

Results. The study has pinpointed that periphrasis is abundant in all genres of media discourse, while it tends to be especially common in political reporting, editorials and interviews, where the management of tone and the expression of ideological stance play an important role.

Key findings:

Euphemism: Periphrasis was employed to water down or to cover up bitter truths.

Examples:

“Collateral damage” (as opposed to “civilian casualties”)

“Job transition” (instead of “job loss”)

Mitigation & Hedging Journalists employed modal and aspectual constructions to hedge or signal caution.

Examples:

“It's suspected that the minister embezzled money.

“Clearly there is a misunderstanding.

Focus: Secondary do that was exclusively used to emphasize an activity.

“He did forewarn the administration at an earlier time.”

In precision or Diplomatic Indirectness: A sentence without a protruding agent was able to be called passive, and enabling the use of entirely neutral impersonals helped to maintain the word order without naming the writer responsible for the claim.


“Issues of concern are that it is assumed the policy is expected to fail.”

“Somebody has made some blunders.” (in agent omission)

Generally, periphrasis as referred to, was used to avoid taking sides, show courtesy, or convey authority, especially when discussing delicate matters of war, politics, or criminal activities.

The results underline periphrastic effects beyond grammar within linguopragmatics. It serves as a discourse strategy that serves the purposes of the media—control of tone, narrative, and ideology. Periphrasis in the media is never neutral (Fairclough, 2001). It manipulates readers' gaze without candid subjectivity.

Periphrasis stiffens modality, a focal point in the pragmatic scope which Levinson (1983) elaborated. Ethically evasive language of “could have been avoided” or “might be necessary” asserts authority, obligation, or probability without embrace of certainty.



Biber (1999) suggests the growth of periphrasis signals a shift in English toward more analytic constructions. This structural shift, combined with pragmatic demands in public discourse, makes periphrasis a linguistic norm rather than an exception in media.

From a critical pragmatics perspective, periphrastic selection can also convey matters of power—e.g., deflecting blame, or projecting objectivity but inevitably promoting an agenda.

Conclusion. Periphrasis in modern English media transcends being a stylistic choice; it is an embedded pragmatic strategy within journalistic communicative discourse. It is used to enable functions such as mitigation, euphemism, emphasis, and concealment, to enable writers to steer sensitive matters, maintain professionalism, and construct meaning.

The paper emphasizes the need to comprehend linguistic alternatives in discourse analysis. Cross-cultural comparison or examination of how readers perceive periphrastic structures in media environments can be investigated in further research.

REFERENCES

Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S., & Finegan, E. (1999). *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. London: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and Power* (2nd ed.). London: Longman.

Halliday, M.A.K. (1994). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (2nd ed.). London: Edward Arnold.

Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.