



FUNCTIONAL ROLE OF PRESENT TENSE IN MODERN PUBLICISTIC TEXTS

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Abstract: This article examines the functional role of present tense constructions in modern publicistic texts. The research demonstrates that present tense forms in journalistic and analytical media communication perform not only temporal but also pragmatic, evaluative, and ideological functions. Particular attention is devoted to the role of present tense in constructing immediacy, emotional involvement, textual framing, and persuasive influence. Applying principles of functional linguistics, pragmatics, and text analysis, the article investigates how present tense contributes to the representation of social reality and audience interpretation in contemporary publicistic communication. The study argues that present tense functions as a multifunctional communicative mechanism shaping perception, evaluation, and interpretative impact within publicistic texts.

Keywords: present tense, publicistic texts, media communication, temporality, pragmatics, functional linguistics.

Modern publicistic texts represent one of the most active and influential forms of social communication. Newspaper articles, political commentaries, editorials, analytical reports, and online publications do not merely provide information about current events. They also interpret social processes, shape ideological perspectives, and influence public consciousness. Within this communicative environment, grammatical structures become important instruments of textual organization and persuasive communication. Among these structures, present tense occupies a particularly significant position due to its ability to construct immediacy, relevance, and emotional engagement.

Traditional grammar defines present tense as a grammatical category expressing simultaneity with the moment of speaking. Such an interpretation considers tense mainly as a temporal marker associated with chronological reference. However, modern linguistics demonstrates that present tense often exceeds its basic grammatical meaning. In publicistic texts, present tense frequently functions not simply as a temporal indicator but as a communicative and pragmatic mechanism shaping interpretation and audience perception.

Functional linguistics emphasizes that grammar should be viewed as a resource for meaning construction rather than an isolated formal system. From



this perspective, present tense becomes part of a broader communicative strategy through which journalists organize information and influence interpretation. Publicistic texts provide especially productive material for studying this phenomenon because media communication constantly combines factual reporting with evaluative representation.

One of the central functions of present tense in publicistic texts is the construction of immediacy. Headlines such as “The government introduces new reforms” or “The parliament discusses economic policy” present events as if they are unfolding directly before the reader. Even when the events occurred prior to publication, present tense minimizes psychological distance between the audience and the information. Consequently, readers perceive the reported situation as urgent, relevant, and socially important.

This phenomenon is often described as the journalistic present or media present. Its purpose is not chronological precision but communicative effectiveness. Through present tense constructions, journalists intensify informational value, strengthen reader involvement, and maintain the dynamic rhythm of the text. Thus, temporal form acquires a pragmatic function closely connected with audience influence.

Present tense is also widely used in historical and political narration. Constructions such as “In 1991, the country enters a new political stage” or “The financial system collapses during the global crisis” transform historical facts into vivid textual experiences. This usage, commonly referred to as the historical present, dramatizes narration and enhances emotional perception. Readers symbolically experience historical events within the present moment rather than perceiving them as distant facts.

Another important function of present tense concerns ideological framing. Statements such as “Society demands reform” or “Democracy faces growing challenges” do not simply describe objective reality. Instead, they construct specific interpretations of social processes. Present tense here functions as a marker of universality and permanence, presenting interpretation as unquestionable fact. In this way, grammatical choice directly contributes to ideological meaning construction.

The pragmatic role of present tense becomes particularly visible in analytical journalism and political commentary. Publicistic texts often rely on implicit evaluation rather than direct judgment. Instead of openly expressing opinions, journalists encode evaluative meanings within grammatical structures. Present tense contributes to this strategy by presenting interpretation as objective description. As a result, readers may accept evaluative assumptions without critically recognizing their persuasive nature.

Present tense also interacts closely with aspectual constructions.



Progressive forms such as “The economy is weakening,” “Public trust is declining,” or “The country is moving toward instability” emphasize process, dynamism, and incompleteness. These constructions intensify emotional effect and support crisis-oriented narratives frequently observed in political and economic publications. The progressive aspect transforms social processes into ongoing dramatic developments, thereby increasing audience involvement.

Moreover, present tense contributes to the construction of collective identity and social solidarity. Publicistic texts frequently employ generalized present constructions such as “Citizens expect transparency” or “The nation seeks stability.” Such forms represent collective attitudes as unified and socially shared. Through repeated usage, present tense participates in the formation of symbolic consensus and collective consciousness.

Another important characteristic of present tense in publicistic texts is its interaction with modality. In many journalistic publications, present tense implies certainty, authority, and institutional confidence. Statements expressed in present tense often appear more reliable and factual than explicitly modal constructions. Consequently, present tense functions as an instrument for strengthening media authority and legitimizing particular interpretations of reality.

Critical linguistic studies emphasize that ideological influence is frequently achieved implicitly through linguistic structures rather than direct persuasion. Present tense functions precisely at this implicit level. By controlling temporal framing, media institutions shape how audiences interpret political events, economic developments, and social conflicts. Temporal grammar therefore becomes part of broader persuasive mechanisms operating within public communication.

The multifunctionality of present tense represents another essential feature of publicistic texts. A single grammatical form may simultaneously express temporal reference, emotional involvement, evaluation, ideological positioning, and persuasive intention. This polyfunctional nature explains why present tense occupies a dominant position in journalistic communication and remains one of the most effective tools of textual construction.

The analysis demonstrates that present tense in modern publicistic texts cannot be interpreted merely as a grammatical category expressing present time. It functions as a complex communicative strategy participating in the representation of reality, organization of interpretation, and construction of ideological meaning. Through present tense, publicistic texts transform temporality into a communicative and social instrument influencing collective perception and public understanding.



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