

UDC 81'42.811.111

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ORCID: 0009-0002-8273-8385**VERBALIZING INCLUSIVITY IN VIRTUAL CORPORATE DISCOURSE OF PROCTER & GAMBLE**

The article aims at exploring the ways of verbalizing the concept of inclusivity in virtual corporate discourse. The novelty of the research stems from the fact that though inclusivity is one of the cornerstones of progressive organizations in the 21st century, it has not yet been considered from a linguistic perspective in corporate discourse. The research is based on a sample of texts collected with the help of continuous sampling from the official website of Procter & Gamble (P&G) corporation. The sample undergoes content analysis that enabled to single out the language units expressing the inclusivity concept. The final stage of the research draws on discourse analysis that helps to correlate the findings with ongoing social trends and to incorporate P&G's online discourse in a broader social context.

*The analysis has uncovered several ways of verbalizing the inclusivity concept in the sample. First of all, inclusivity presupposes unity and cohesion within the company as well as humanity on the whole. The sample abounds in the inclusive first-person pronouns *we* and *our* that imply the personnel's cohesion and solidarity. The frequency of the inclusive pronouns is incomparably (over 20 times) higher than the usage of the second person pronouns or direct nominations such as *P&G*. The pronominal way of expressing inclusivity is complemented with the extensive use of lexical means that deliver the idea of unity and solidarity. Besides the lexemes *inclusivity* and *inclusive*, here belong such morphologically diverse items as *community*, *together*, *all*, *mutual* and *to share*. Remarkably, inclusivity may embrace not only P&G's staff but also every human being, which is expressed in the sample with the noun *humanity* or the phrase *all people*. P&G's website claims that the corporation non-discriminatively includes the social groups (women, the disabled, people of color; LGBT+ people) whose recognition is considered to be a marker of inclusivity in the 21st century.*

*In addition, the concept of inclusivity acquires a spatial dimension: the sample contains passages that emphasize the worldwide scope of P&G's activity. This omnipresence is verbalized with prepositional phrases, in particular, those with the noun *world* (e.g., *around the world*) and the adjective *global*.*

Thus, the concept of inclusivity is consistently verbalized in P&G's online corporate discourse. Further study may examine the multimodal aspect of expressing inclusivity in corporate texts.

Key words: corporate discourse, inclusivity, concept, verbalization, lexeme.

Тетяна Чаюк, Сергій Бабкін. ВЕРБАЛІЗАЦІЯ ІНКЛЮЗИВНОСТІ У ВІРТУАЛЬНОМУ КОРПОРАТИВНОМУ ДИСКУРСІ КОРПОРАЦІЇ PROCTER & GAMBLE

*Стаття присвячена вивченню шляхів вербалізації концепту *inclusivity* у віртуальному корпоративному дискурсі. Новизна дослідження полягає в тому, що хоча інклюзивність є наріжним каменем прогресивних корпорацій у XXI столітті, цей концепт ще не висвітлювався лінгвістикою на матеріалі корпоративного дискурсу. Дослідження ґрунтується на текстах, відібраних методом суцільної вибірки з офіційного вебсайта корпорації Procter&Gamble (P&G). До текстів було застосовано контент-аналіз задля виявлення мовних одиниць, які виражають концепт *inclusivity*. Заключний етап дослідження використовує дискурсивний аналіз, який допомагає зіставити результати з сучасними соціальними трендами та вписати віртуальний дискурс корпорації P&G's у загальний соціальний контекст.*

*У процесі роботи було виявлено кілька шляхів вербалізації концепта *inclusivity* у вибірці. Перш за все, *inclusivity* передбачає єдність усередині компанії та людства в цілому. Тексти, які містять чисельні випадки вживання інклюзивних займенників першої особи *we* та *our*, імпліцитно вказують на солідарність та єдність персоналу. Частотність інклюзивних займенників незрівнянно вища (більш ніж у 20 разів) за використання займенників другої особи або безпосередньої номінації корпорації P&G. Вираження інклюзивності займенниками доповнюється широким використанням різноманітних лексичних засобів, які передають значення єдності та солідарності. Окрім лексем *inclusivity* та *inclusive*, до таких належать морфологічно різноманітні одиниці *community*, *together*, *all*, *mutual*, *to share*. Слід зазначити, що *inclusivity* може включати в себе не тільки працівників корпорації P&G, але й усе людство, що виражається іменником *humanity* або словосполученням *all people*. У текстах вибірки розрізняються ті соціальні групи (жінки, люди з обмеженими можливостями, раси та представники ЛГБТ+ спільноти), визнання яких вважається маркером політики інклюзивності у XXI столітті.*

Концепт *inclusivity* має і просторовий вимір: вибірка містить фрагменти, які наголошують на світовому масштабі діяльності P&G. Ця ідея всюдисущості вербалізується за допомогою прийменникових словосполучень, зокрема з іменником *world* (наприклад, *around the world*) та прикметником *global*.

Отже, концепт *inclusivity* послідовно вербалізовано в віртуальному корпоративному дискурсі компанії P&G. Перспективним напрямом подальшого дослідження може бути вивчення мультимодального вираження концепту *inclusivity* в корпоративних текстах.

Ключові слова: корпоративний дискурс, інклюзивність, концепт, вербалізація, лексема.

Statement of the Problem. Despite their unquestionable global leadership as employers and goods and service providers, transnational corporations make considerable efforts to build their positive image and present it to consumers, partners and potential employees. The Internet is probably the key source of information about a company and, therefore, Internet pages are nowadays the main platform where companies are engaged in image building.

A large share of content delivered through official corporate sites does not deal with the company's products but rather with the company's culture (values, structure, history, etc.). This information is supposed to construct the company's positive image. Hence, corporate websites are designed to attract the best workforce and business offers in the competitive global market. One of the techniques of positive image-building is presenting a company as the champion of the latest social trends and inclusivity belongs to the progressive ideas of today.

Research review. Corporate discourse is defined as a purposeful communicative activity that takes place in an organization, abides by the organization's culture and aims at unifying behavioural patterns of the company's employees [16, p. 4–5]. Corporate discourse is studied from a variety of perspectives: ethnographic approaches use interviews and observation to uncover relations that underlie immediate contexts and reveal a broader social picture; intercultural approaches research the interplay of ethnic cultures within multicultural corporate settings and undermine the belief in culture-silent corporate discourse; multimodal studies explore the fundamental role of signs in corporate meaning-making; discourse analysis embeds corporate discourse in a broader social context [1, p. 2–4]. Different approaches may be applied to a variety of genres within corporate discourse: job advertisements, job interviews, orientation sessions, employee newsletters, press releases, stakeholder meetings, annual reports, etc.

There are two sides to corporate interactions: internal and external. It is difficult for researchers to obtain access to internal corporate communication. One of the few studies in this area belongs to Lischinski [7] who applies critical discourse analysis to look into the training materials provided to new employees

of a British corporation. The sample displays the company's intention to brand its employees as 'partners', to emphasize its uniqueness and reciprocal relations with the personnel and, in effect, to downplay the chain of command. Thus, discourse analysis reveals employee branding as «a highly problematic discursive practice; it can be seen as an attempt to 'mould' employees' minds by co-opting them to think and behave in the ways desired by the corporation, which essentially turns them into a commodity ready to be used as a competitive advantage for the increase in profits» [4, p. 674]. Another research examines internal corporate communication at Netflix after the release of *The Closer* and the public debate over the corporation's progressive culture and its promotion of diverse content [5].

Recent studies examine other internal issues that affect performance and are primarily of discursive nature, namely the detrimental effect of supervisors' verbal aggressiveness [15] and controversies over gender quotas in corporate boards [6].

The Internet is the arena of external corporate communication accessible to global audiences. Breeze notes that companies employ multimodality and carefully design their virtual presence through «about us» sections, mission statements, social responsibility reports, etc. [1]. Thus, organizations virtually construct and negotiate their identity, deal with public concerns and interact with the world outside the company's premises. So-called 'employer branding' strategies are constantly fended for, if they are effective, they attract better candidates to fill in vacancies [3].

Studies of corporate communication concentrate on the lexical content of business texts and relate their lexical peculiarities (for example, numerous abbreviations) to communicative settings of business interactions where brevity equals efficiency [20]. Some researchers approach corporate discourse from a pragmatic perspective. These studies employ the Gricean Cooperative Principle and the Politeness Principle to compliance codes of US companies and conclude that these documents follow the four cooperation maxims and the five politeness maxims [19]. Focused on linguistic peculiarities of virtual discourse (e.g., emails, chats, video conferences) produced by corporate subjects,

researchers analyze language use on social media for PR purposes, namely corporate image-building, formation of public opinion, internal and external communication [17].

Some scholars adopt the perspective of cognitive linguistics and look at a company’s discourse as a phenomenon based on a set of metaphors. Thus, Ivantsiv analyzes online English-language press releases of the world’s leading cosmetic companies and uncovers a set of anthropomorphic conceptual metaphors within the metaphorical model «Business is a human being» that underlies the image-making discourse of these companies. According to the linguist, the model «enables image-makers to develop a powerful image of a cosmetic company as a perfect organism» [18, p. 181]. In other words, drawing on the complexity of the human organism that combines basic physiology and sophisticated processes of human social activity, PR practitioners present cosmetic business by referring to the clear-cut axiological system familiar to their consumers.

The objective of the article. The objective of this article is to analyze the means used on the official website of Procter & Gamble corporation within the branding strategy aimed at presenting **inclusivity** as the company’s hallmark. To achieve the objective, the research employs conceptual content analysis and discourse analysis to texts from P&G’s official corporate website. The sample contains over 5,000 words.

Main text. The Cambridge online dictionary defines *inclusivity* as «the fact of including all types of people, things or ideas and treating them all fairly and equally» [2].

P&G’s intention to present the company as a collective body is obvious from the very title of the *Who we are* section that contains the inclusive first-person personal pronoun *we*. Table 1 below provides the quantitative analysis of the usage of inclusive first-person personal and possessive pronouns *we/us* and *our*, the second-person personal and possessive pronouns *you* and *your* as well as the company’s name P&G in the sample:

LEXEMES	FREQUENCY in the sample
<i>we</i>	246
<i>us</i>	143
<i>our</i>	186
<i>you</i>	12
<i>your</i>	5
<i>P&G</i>	51

Fig. 1. Quantitative analysis of inclusive first- and second-person pronouns and P&G name in the sample

Permeated with the inclusive first-person pronouns, the text delivers the ideas of solidarity and continuity: the 185-year-long corporate history is told smoothly by the collective narrator: *For more than 185 years, we’ve challenged the norm and inspired the future – from the products we put on the shelf to the people we bring on our team* [10].

Though there are sections with ‘impersonal’ titles (e.g., *A corporate force for good, A company that puts people first*), they are followed with subtitles full of inclusive pronouns: **Our employees have been the driving force behind our support for our environment, communities, and people – a practice that has been ingrained in our culture for over a century; What allows us to be one of the largest consumer goods companies in the world is filling our buildings with passionate, inspired, motivated people who believe in doing better than good, every day** [10].

The ideas of inclusivity and company as a unity are also verbalized with the help of the nouns *inclusivity* and *community*, the adjectives *inclusive* and *mutual*, the adverb *together*, and the verbs *to share* and *to unite*: *We believe in diversity & inclusion. That’s why we support it however we can – from creating flexible work schedules for our employees to building inclusive playgrounds... We believe in the power of diversity and the impact we make when we come together united by shared values and purpose* [10]; *We believe that doing what is right for the business with integrity will lead to mutual success for both the Company and the individual. Our quest for mutual success ties us together* [12]; *It will take all of us, working together, to make a bigger impact that benefits all of us... Together we can make lasting systemic change for racial and ethnic equality... We aspire to build a world free from gender bias for us all* [9]; *We started with a commitment to use our voice as a force for good and a force for growth by accurately portraying ALL people in our advertising* [14].

It is noteworthy that the noun *humanity* may be a contextual synonym for *all*: *We’re using our voice to drive acceptance, inclusion and love for humanity* [9].

The formula of success is presented visually as an equation of the organization itself and an employee that yields mutual success (see Figure 2). The image implies complementarity and equality of the two components that lead to prosperity:



Fig. 2. Visualization of success at P&G [13]

Remarkably, though this image features the individualistic *me* and expresses appreciation of an individual, it is quickly overridden by the avalanche of statements that celebrate teamwork, sharing and solidarity. *Me* is related to diversity, yet the discourse presents diversity as a patchwork of social groups that are distinguished as valuable and equal. Hence, the *Diversity in Workforce* section contains data on the representation of gender, ethnic and racial groups in various corporate positions [8], whereas the section titled *A company that puts people first* offers data on P&G's policies to advance not only gender equality but also guarantee rights of members of the LGBT+ community and the disabled [10]: *Two years before the U.S. government mandates it, we initiate a diversity program for all employees—providing training and support to grow leaders regardless of sex, race, or religious orientation* [10]; *We're making progress each day, and recognize we have work to do to make our company, brands, and services even more inclusive for people with disabilities* [11].

Thus, inclusivity is achieved by acknowledging various social groups and allowing the employees to claim membership in these groups in corporate settings.

It is noteworthy that inclusivity has both social and spatial dimensions. While the social dimension means employing and acknowledging various social groups, the spatial dimension presupposes that the company's activity embraces large territories. P&G is a transnational corporation whose products are manufactured and sold worldwide, which is consistently

stressed in the website texts. The primary means used to deliver this idea are the noun *world* that appears in adverbial modifiers of place or as an attribute as well as the adjective *global*: *We recognize that representation enables us to understand and serve the billions of consumers around the world* [8]; *We will provide branded products and services of superior quality and value that improve the lives of the world's consumers...* [12]; *Global workforce representation by gender: (...) more women are members of P&G's Global Leadership Council, hold Executive Leadership roles, and in global management positions compared to 2015* [8].

There are other, less typical ways of delivering the idea of the all-embracing scale of the company's activity, e.g., the adverbial phrase *inside P&G and beyond* in *We aspire to build a disability confident culture both inside P&G and beyond* [9].

Conclusions. The analysis of P&G's official website presents a study of external corporate discourse aimed at building the company's positive image for the public. The concept of inclusivity presented in P&G's texts is twofold: it has social and spatial dimensions. Socially, the company claims to recognize and treat non-discriminatively all social groups and minorities; spatially, the scope of the company's activity embraces the entire world. These two aspects of inclusivity are verbalized by a set of numerous lexical means ranging from inclusive pronouns to prepositional phrases. The research may be furthered by studying multimodal ways of expressing inclusivity in P&G's discourse.

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