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**LINGUISTIC EXPERTISE OF CONFLICT TEXTS: LIMITS OF
COMPETENCE OF A LINGUIST-EXPERT**

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Abstract

Linguistic expertise is one of up-to-date branch of worldwide, Russian linguistics. The expertise of informational materials based upon countering extremism – one of the most demanded kind of applied linguistic research, because of the fact that extremism being a complex social, sociocultural, sociopolitical, legal phenomenon makes the research tasks more complicated for a researcher. The leading research task for a linguist is to answer the questions formulated by judicial organizations, representatives of legal community, business and state institutions, citizens. The ways questions formulated are observed, the practice of linguist-expert concerning extremism’s features revealing is presented in the article. One of the difficulties an expert-linguist encounters while expertising is definition of limits of his competence. The article is based upon 120 authorizations, containing more than 600 questions divided into 5 semantic groups: questions about content, questions about author and addressee, questions about calls for action, questions about markers and characteristics, questions about consequences. In addition, there is a special group of questions that is entitled by us as “snow ball”. As a conclusion the authors of the article emphasize that it is necessary to stimulate the development of complex expertise, keeping precise differentiation of duties and capabilities of specialists, taking into consideration competence of a linguist-expert as a starting point of their realization, to convince persons concerned of the truth of the fact and extend these approaches as they contribute to more efficient and effective getting of reliable information.

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Keywords: Linguistic expertise, limits of competence of a linguist-expert, complex researches, features of extremism, countering extremism.



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1. Introduction

As it is known linguistic expertise is one of up-to-date branches of world-wide and Russian applied linguistics (Kara-Murza, 2016).

1.1. Phenomenon of extremism

The expertise of informational materials based upon countering extremism is one of the most demanded kind of applied linguistic research (Kicheva, 2019), because of the fact that extremism being a complex social, sociocultural, sociopolitical, legal phenomenon makes the research tasks more complicated for a researcher (Galyashina, 2018; Olennikov, 2016).

1.2. Lingvo-expert practice

As linguists-experts say, the main research task of a linguist is to answer the questions formulated by judicial organizations, representatives of legal community, business and state institutions, citizens. There is a tendency in lingvo-expert practice when the questions formulated by judicial organizations and representatives of legal institutions go beyond the scope of competence of an expert (Gekkina, 2016). Sometimes no special linguistic knowledge is demanded to answer such questions. The expert practice of linguists concerning extremism's features revealing is described in the paper.

2. Problem Statement

In specialized literature the limits of competence of a linguist-expert are clearly described.

- The questions addressed to a linguist-expert must be related to the linguistics – the scientific study of a language, its structure's regularities and natural language's usage while producing and perception of utterances and speech compositions by the native speakers (Brinev, 2014).
- The questions constituting the sphere of competence of a jurist (qualifying of types of criminal offence; qualifying of a subject of criminal offence; qualifying of the facts revealed as aggravated or extenuating); a psychologist (qualifying of moral damage, the level of endamagement to professional reputation, potential to maintain social, religious, cross-national hatred and hostility); a philosopher (contravention of norms of ethics, matching the facts to reality and reliability) (Butakova, 2019).

3. Research Questions

Among the research questions of the article there are the following ones:

3.1. General classification

What are the main groups all the questions observed can be subdivided?

3.2. Semantic differentiation

What are semantic differences between the groups of questions?

3.3. Limits of linguistic competence

What types of questions are out of linguistic competence?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of study is to construct the substantive borders of linguistic competence basing upon analysis of questions' semantics.

5. Research Methods

Methods of investigation are based upon complex interdisciplinary approach. Among them there are discourse analysis, content analysis, and observation.

5.1. Materials for analysis

More than 120 authorizations containing approximately 600 questions addressed to linguist-expert were analysed while research.

5.2. Groups of questions

All the questions observed can be divided into five semantic groups:

- Questions about content
- Questions about author and addressee
- Questions about calls for action
- Questions about markers and characteristics
- Questions about consequences

In addition, there is a special group of questions that is entitled by us as "snow ball".

6. Findings

Let's observe the groups of questions revealed taking into consideration the limits of competence of a linguist-expert.

6.1. Questions about content

The first group is a group of questions closely connected with revealing of general idea of the material, character of information presented: *Does this text have open or coded idea?; Can it be easily interpreted?; What is general and conceptual content of the materials submitted for research?; What's the way information in an address is presented: as a personal opinion, supposition, conviction or statements of facts?*

A linguist gives answers to such questions basing upon research of materials' content. As a rule, he answers that the information is open and available for perception and interpretation, it is expressed by means of statements. If it is evident that the content is implicit, a linguist works with connotations and subtext, signs (signals) of implicitly, identifies the asymmetry between plane of content and plane of expression.

One more type of such questions can be presented by means of a wording: *What is the communicative goal of the text (context) of the letter?*

In this case linguist's competence can be realized. Such kinds of texts can be studied from the position of speech act theory: a linguist draws some conclusions about certain speech strategies that can be revealed in the materials studied – representative, argumentative, directive ones.

A researcher can come across with some difficulties while studying some visual messages – creolized texts (Nezhura, 2016; Voroshilova, 2013). As an example, let us pay your attention to the creolized text (Figure 01.) followed by some questions fixed in the authorization: *What is the general idea of the materials?; What is depicted in the image?*



Figure 01. Creolized text “FLYING SPAGHETTI MONSTER”

Linguistic part consists of the analysis of some English phrases “FLYING SPAGHETTI MONSTER”. A linguist-expert makes the following conclusion after translation of the phrase into Russian: “The “creature” depicted is holding a book (probably the Bible)”. Then he translates the notes from the book into Russian, paying some special attention to the interjection “ARRRRGH!”, emphasizing that “the phrase under interpretation comes from the Gospel of John”.

A theologian finds out that the main character of Pastafarianism (Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster) is depicted. As the followers say the fact of his existence can't be either confirmed or denied, as the existence of God in Christianity or any other religions. Nowadays Pastafarianism is classified by the specialists as an artificial religion and has become a sort of mockery of a religion (Carole, 2010).

The image under analysis is a distorted image of Christ (the icon “God Pantocrator on a throne”, Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood (Tserkov' Spas ana Krovi). The distorted image has an idea that everything can be brought to absurd, in this context the representatives of Pastafarianism are sure that everybody, even a spaghetti monster can be considered to be God (Henderson, 2012).

6.2. Questions about author and addressee

The second group of questions gives a linguist an opportunity to identify from one hand an author of the text (message, utterance) and from another one – its addressee. When we talk about an author, we mean its collective characteristics and general information about those who create such kind of texts (Breusova, Zasytkin, & Sirotkina, 2016). As a rule, this group of questions can't be addressed to linguists: *Is it evident that the materials (texts) under study are created by people belonging to any political, religious, national or cultural communities famous for their extremism activities?; Are the materials (texts) under analysis a part of ideology of ultra-nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or any other doctrines?; Are there any attributes or symbols of any political, religious, national or cultural communities famous for their extremism activities?*

Such kind of questions are not answered by linguists, some other specialists (historians, theologians, culturologists) are invited. Linguists describe the symbols but it is important to analyze the context of their usage (Kishina, 2019).

For instance, a video fragment was presented for linguistic expertise. Video fragment is a short two-minute plot about a preacher who is speaking that a genuine Muslim must do Salah. All the questions addressed to a linguist about calls for action and markers of humiliation based upon nationality or religion are answered negatively, as no such linguistic means are revealed. At the same time a theologian involved into research established that the speaker is similar by sight to the personage known as Abu Saad Said al-Buryati (Said Buryatsky) – a member of terrorist group, salafit (vahabit) preacher and an islamist militant leader in the Russian North Caucasus.

As a result, the conclusion of the expertise has absolutely polar context and interpretation from the linguistic one.

6.3. Questions about calls for action

The third group of questions is considered to be “the most linguistic one”. The questions connected with calls' for action revealing. As expert practice shows that their formulations (wordings) can vary. Some nuances concerning limits of competence of a linguist-expert can appear: *1) Are there any calls for actions of violent character? If there are, what actions are meant?; 2) Are there any calls for extremism or terrorist activities?*

To our mind, the second question requires not only linguistic qualification from a linguist-expert but factually his agreement / disagreement with jurist qualification formulated in the question.

A linguist encounters questions about calls for action that can be qualified as specially-oriented: *Are there public calls for propaganda of incitement of the masses in the utterances under analysis?; Is there any information inducing actions against nation, religion or their representatives in the materials under interpretation?; Does this text contain calls for organization of community to commit extremism or terrorist actions?*

Working process of an expert while answering such questions becomes more complicated if the materials analyzed consist of creolized texts. It is rather important for a linguist-expert to find the balance between the verbal and visual components (Vasilyeva & Duskaeva, 2016).

6.4. Questions about markers and characteristics

To the fourth group of questions we refer those ones about such phenomenon as threat, recruitment, justification, propaganda, discrimination, humiliation, negative information.

Taking into consideration the fact that speech act of call for action can be realized as a means of expression of all the phenomena enumerated, we intentionally differentiate this group of questions, as the phenomena can be realized by means of other linguistic units. Among such questions there are the following: *Are there the utterances in the materials under consideration negatively assessing a person or a group of people (social community)?; What sort of language means are used in the materials to form negative and humiliating image of this or that religious group?; Are there words or utterances in the materials under study expressing explicit contempt, humiliation towards religious feelings of church members?; Are there humiliating characteristics, negative emotional assessment and attitude in the materials under analysis towards ethnic, race, religious social group or their representatives?; Are there utterances in the material under study appreciating hostile actions of a social group towards another one?; Do the materials under study justify terrorist activity of members of international terrorist organizations?*

6.5. Questions about consequences

To the fifth group of questions we refer all the questions concerning various consequences: *Do the materials under study contradict public morals and ethic?* It is evident that the categories of “public morals” and “ethic” are not linguistic ones. Accordingly, a linguist-expert is not able to answer the question and he is forced to conclude that the question asked is out of his professional competence.

The same situation is with such categories as “formation of incentives”, “negative emotional assessment”, “attitude”: *Does audio and visual materials under expertise have the potential to form incentives for illegal acts? What are the circumstances to form negative emotional assessment and attitude of an addressee towards ethnic, race, religious social group or their representatives? Are such graphic images (hints, purports) able to give offence (injure) the feelings of church members?*

6.6. “Snow ball” questions

We entitled the last group of questions as “snow ball” questions. They are built up basing upon that principle, in other words they are about everything at once summarizing the semantics of five groups of questions described: 1) *Are there the markers of inducement to act in the materials? If there are any, what are the role and function of interlocutors of the communicative situation? What’s the character of interlocutors’ expression of will (request, suggestion, coercion)? What actions and subjects, circumstances of actions and events are meant?; 2) Does the speaker associate himself with any social organization? If he does, what’s the organization and why? Are there any calls for action in the materials aimed at implosion’s accomplishment or any other dangerous actions? If there are some, what kind of linguistic markers are used to point at that fact? Is there any information expressed by the language markers about the purpose of these actions? If there is, what is the information?*

In order to answer such kind of questions, it is necessary for a linguist-expert to distinguish their “linguistic component”, all the other components are out of linguistic competence.

7. Conclusion

Consequently, it is necessary to admit that in lingvo-expert practice a lot of things are still made intuitively. We can't agree more that in the theory of method, working out of technics and lingvo-expert methodology there are so many difficulties to deal with (Sadova, 2016).

7.1. Methodology verification

It is necessary to organize the process of methodology verification and capabilities of a linguist-expert in order to broaden their qualification to save not only the object but also the subject of analysis.

7.2. Complex investigations

It is necessary to stimulate the development of complex expertise, keeping precise differentiation of duties and capabilities of specialists, taking into consideration competence of a linguist-expert as a starting point of their realization.

It is necessary to convince persons concerned of the truth of the fact and extend these approaches as they contribute to more efficient and effective getting of reliable information.

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