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**CATEGORIES OF TEXT REPRESENTING ITS
AUTHENTICITY (ON THE BASIS OF GERMAN TEXTS)**

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Abstract

The research is focused on studying a text phenomenon, its complex nature and the variety of forms which make it relevant to identify the most complete set of categories, reflecting its essential properties as a verbal object. The study is carried out as part of the linguistics of the text. Its purpose is to describe the nomenclature of text categories characterizing its authenticity, as well as to describe the features of the implementation of these categories in various types of the authentic text. We define the authentic text as a kind of the documentary text, i.e. based on facts, not fiction contrary to the fictitious text. This opposition goes back to the works of the French literary critic Genette G., who used the concept of *authentic autobiography*, separating it from the literary stylization of this type of text. The peculiarity of the authentic text, therefore, is that it is based on real events from the life of the author of the text. According to the research, authenticity is represented with the help of text categories of personality, reference and modality, which manifest their specific features in the text. The material under the study consists of various kinds of autobiographical texts, such as epistolary texts of private correspondence of the Austrian writer Franz Kafka, as well as more modern forms of written communication – message texts on German forums for teenagers and personal blogs of German-speaking authors. Such methods as structural-semantic, contextual, descriptive and comparative analysis are used in the research.

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Keywords: Authentic text, category of personality, reference, reflective modality.



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1. Introduction

This study is carried out as part of the linguistics of the text and is aimed at the study of the main object of this field – the text, and the complexity of its nature, which determines the necessity of establishing the most complete set of categories that reflect its nature as a verbal product. Some attempts have been undertaken to identify a number of differential categories that allow identifying such a feature of the text as authenticity (Podyapolskaya, 2018, 2019). This article will generalize the existing findings in order to clarify the concept of an authentic text. The texts under the research will include some modern forms of written communication, i.e. messages on personal blogs of German-speaking authors on the Internet, as well as messages on German-speaking forums, in addition to the private correspondence of the Austrian writer Franz Kafka. These texts serve as a source of study to identify the realms of representation of the researched categories in different types of authentic texts.

Authenticity as an essential feature of the studied type of text is realized through such categories as personality, reference and modality, which show their specificity in this type of text. An authentic text refers to a specific real communicative situation, a personified type of narrator (combining two hypostases – the author and the narrator) and is characterized by reflective modality.

The study develops the definition of the category of text by the linguist Turaeva (2018), who defines “it as a set of general, but significant properties, reflecting the nature of the text as a verbal object. The author notes the universality of the nature of the text category, which means that it is inherent in any text, regardless of its language and type” (p. 97). The definition can be developed by adding the universality of the text category does not exclude the uniqueness of its representation in various types of text. Moreover, we suggest that in each separate type of text, leading (text-forming) categories can be distinguished that determine its specificity and act as an integrative and differential criterion when assigning a text to a particular class or type.

The problem of various aspects of the nature of the text was studied in works of many scholars, such as Arnold (2019), Arutyunova (2017), Bakhtin (2017), Halperin (2019), van Dijk (2015), Kuharenko (2019), Lotman (2018), Paducheva (2010), etc. Nowadays this area of research continues to be relevant and debatable, since we are dealing with an object of multifaceted and diverse nature that is expressed by an unlimited variety of forms, which need to be properly understood and described.

2. Problem Statement

The authentic text (from ancient Greek *αὐθεντικός* – “genuine”) is traditionally understood as the original, i.e. not an educational text used for methodological purposes for teaching a foreign language, making it possible to classify plenty of different genres and types of text. We interpret this concept much narrower and consider authentic text as a kind of documentary text, i.e. based on facts, not fiction (fictitious text). The authentic/fictitious opposition goes back to the works of French literary critic, one of the founders of modern narratology, Genette (1998), who uses the concept of authentic autobiography, separating it from the literary stylization of this type of text, “from a fake authentic autobiographical story” (p. 387). The peculiarity of the authentic text, therefore, is that it is based on real events from the author’s life. On the basis of this criterion, various kinds of autobiographical texts can be assigned by

their nature to authentic texts. In addition to the studied types of authentic text, there can be other forms of correspondence (emails, messengers, chats, website pages), as well as various kinds of diary entries, memoirs, autobiographies, etc., which can also be described from the point of view of the implementation of the studied categories.

3. Research Questions

In this study we intend to consider the following questions:

3.1. The study of the implementation of the category of personality in authentic texts (personal letters, messages on forums and personal blogs) through the specifics of the representation of the author/narrator as one of the anthropocentric cores of the text.

3.2. Establishing the uniqueness of the implementation of the category of reference in the variety of authentic texts by describing its localization (correlation with the outside world), reflecting the communicative situation under the authentic text.

3.3. Identification of the peculiarity of the implementation of the category of modality in authentic texts by establishing the limitations imposed by such a variety as reflexive modality on the use of various modes of narration.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to describe the nomenclature of universal text categories that manifest such a feature of the text as authenticity, as well as to establish the specifics of the functioning of these categories in the variety of authentic texts as the research material. This study, therefore, makes a certain contribution to the development of one of the acute problems of the linguistics of text, i.e. the identification of categories of text, as well as establishing the uniqueness of their implementation in various types of text.

Furthermore, the analysis of the implementation of text categories manifesting its authenticity makes it possible to establish criteria for more accurate identification of the signs of *fictional text* (fictionalness, unreliability), i.e. signs that reduce the amount of reliability of the information presented in the text. Some of these criteria (e.g., reference to a specific objective communicative situation, the actual narrative mode) can be used as additional criteria for establishing true/false nature of any non-fictional text.

5. Research Methods

The research has been conducted with the help of such methods as structural-semantic, contextual as well as descriptive and comparative analysis. The use of the structural-semantic method made it possible to identify elements of different levels integrated into the text structure; their meaning and content is the basis for considering them as means of expressing the categories under the study. Thus, the primary narrative form, realized with the help of personal as well as possessive and reflexive pronouns of the first person and forms of finite verbs that are in a sequence, acts as a means of representing the category of personality. In addition, an explicit means of designating the author is a proper name (or

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nickname in messages on forums), which also acts as a composite element of the text; in an epistolary text it can be the signature that is located at the end of the letter.

The contextual method involves the analysis of both a narrow and a wide context. A narrow context provides the analysis of the meaning of a particular language unit within the boundaries of one or more sentences, whereas a wide context provides the analysis of the communicative situation: its participants, place and time. For example, in the process of analyzing the uniqueness of the implementation of the reflexive modality and the corresponding factual narrative mode, the narrow context is used to identify language units that mark homodiegetic (a message about yourself) or heterodiegetic (a message about another person) narrative modes. At the same time the study of the category of reference is better connecting to the analysis of a wide context, since it marks the correlation of the text with the real world and its specific, objective communicative situation. So, for example, a wide context allows to establish the specific content of a number of deictics, i.e. adverbs of place and time, nominal phrases with space-time semantics.

The method of comparative analysis, as well as the descriptive analytical method, brought together, help establish and describe the general and distinctive features of the studied varieties of authentic text from the point of view of the implementation of the above categories, which will be further demonstrated.

6. Findings

6.1. Representation of the category of personality in authentic text

The category of personality is a functional-semantic category of text which is manifested through the central subject of the act of utterance – author / narrator of the text. The essential feature that distinguishes authentic text from the entire body of documentary texts is the personified character of its author / narrator, who can also act as a character himself. In an authentic text, the author (the one who creates the text), the narrator (the one who tells the story), and often the character (the one who is narrated or described) are combined in one person, since the authentic text is a story about oneself, one's life, reflection on the experience.

The author / narrator of an authentic text is a real, not fictional individual. In the further description the “narrator” component will be omitted, and the notion “author of the text” will be used implying, however, both the author and the narrator equally. This kind of equality adds more responsibility on the author for what he writes in the text. In case of fictitious text, though, the author differentiate himself from the narrator, and the latter appears to be fictitious, and, accordingly, the author doesn't take responsibility for the meaning of the text. At the language level, the personified character of the author of authentic text is expressed, first of all, in the primary narrative form, which, as noted above, is realized using various kinds of first person pronouns, as well as substantive means of designating the addressee in the form of proper names, as well as various kinds of pseudonyms (eg., nicknames in messages on forums).

Let's study some examples. In epistolary text, one of the means of authentication of the author identity, and a guarantee of the relevance of the author statements, is the signature put at the end of the letter, as well as the full name of the sender on the envelope. In the studied letters of Kafka (1999), the

signature can be formal “Your Franz Kafka” (p.176), or “Franz Kafka devoted to you” (p.183), or “Heartily devoted to you: Doc. F. Kafka” (p.184), and sometimes rather informal “Yours, Franz” (p.170), or “Thank you, Franz K.” (p.184), “Fkafka” (p.162), and “FK” (p. 313), etc. The choice of the signature determines the nature of the relationship of the author and addressee.

In case of blogging, the author of the blog is also a real public figure who sometimes omits his full name, but publishes his photo confirming his “authenticity”. In addition, blog authors post information about themselves in Sections About Me, About Us, About, etc., in order to attract the readers, gain confidence, convince them that the information presented in the blogs is authentic and true. For example, the author of the blog Travel Run Play Stöwe (2018) provides rather detailed autobiographical information in the About section: “I grew up in Mainz and was never particularly interested in travel or sports. For most of my youth and adulthood I was busy shuffling from one personal crisis to another.” (para.3).

The issue of authentication of the author’s identity is much more acute in such texts as messages on forums, since most of them do not indicate their real name, but only a nickname – an identifier under which the user is registered on the forum site. Of course, it’s sometimes possible to identify the author’s age if it appears on forum sites for teenagers (bke-Jugendberatung.de, Helles-Köpfchen.de). For example, on the website Helles-Köpfchen.de in the forum theme “YouTube Kids” the age of the user is given in brackets next to the nickname to the left of the main text, eg., Ta**** (12), Niklboy (13), legozocker (13), nisa2 (15), Legofan (9), Bimba (14), Agnes (14) (YouTube Kids, 2017).

At the same time, the predominantly confessional nature of forum texts, as well as a great number of details of the author’s personal life suggest that we are not dealing with a fictional character, but an authentic person. As an example, the quote from the forum “bke-Jugendberatung.de” is a very emotional text about an unpleasant incident that occurred to the author of the message under the pseudonym Kleines-Schaeffchen (2019), and its message subject consists of the notation of emotions: “Fear Anger Panic Shame”. The text is full of expressive, emotionally colored vocabulary, such as aggressive, provoke, situation escalated, physical attack, panic, etc.: “I became aggressive again, allowed strangers to provoke myself. The situation escalated and it came to the use of physical force. They wanted to detain me, and then I panicked. When they threatened me with the police, I fled” (para.1-2).

The above examples demonstrate that the narration in all cases is conducted in the first person.

6.2. Representation of the category of reference in authentic text

Based on Paducheva’s ideas (2010), this study analyses reference as the correlation of the text, being a verbal object, with other extralinguistic objects or situations. Paducheva (2010) notes:

The mechanisms for correlating a linguistic text with a fictional and real world are in many ways similar, but not identical; the real world exists independently of the text, and the fictional world is generated by the text (p. 244).

This is one of the main differences between the fictitious and documentary texts, the authentic text being a kind of the latter one.

The correlation (localization) of an authentic text with the real world is expressed through the communicative situation, forming its basis. This situation has specific spatial and temporal characteristics, i.e. objective (chronological) time and a specific (really existing) place or scene. The language means are, first of all, the details of the place and time, as well as various kinds of geographical names, realities, etc. They mark the moment of the author speech for determining spatial and temporal characteristics of events or facts, etc., reported in the text. For example, in an epistolary text, this is the date and place of its writing, which can be located both at the beginning and at the end of the text. In fact, messages on forums and personal blogs also contain information on the date and exact time of their publication. The reference of an authentic text with the real world is carried out, among other things, by describing this world, i.e., life circumstances in which the author finds himself, actual places in which he used to be or was at the time of writing/publishing the text, real individuals who are related to him, etc.

In the family blog *Baby, Kind & Meer (Toddler, Child & Sea)*, its author Hart (2020) describes the joys and problems of family life with three children. So her post “We are pregnant! Our summer kid 2020 is on the way” from February 5, 2020 attracts reader's attention to fairly intimate details of her personal life:

As I sit here and write this post, I still can't believe it myself. I am currently in the 11th week of pregnancy <...> At the time Micha and I met – and the years after – we both knew that one day we would have four children. From the very beginning. Our parenthood then started with Lilli in 2009, followed by Lotte in 2012 and finally Tom in 2015 (para.1-2).

The adverb *here* in this quotation indicates the place where the author lives – Schönberg (Holstein), Germany (Sektion *Impressum*). The publication date marks the real time – the moment of the author's speech.

It should be noted that in texts like blogs, reference to the real world is also supported by photographs and videos in which the author and other characters are captured, as well as the places the author has been to and other moments of his life. As for epistolary texts, something similar can be observed in the view cards that the author uses to write letters from the places he visited. An example can be 2 postcards of Kafka (1999) addressed to Felice Bauer. The first is of November 26, 1912, sent from the city of Kratzau with a view of the market square (p.563). The second is of December 9, 1912, sent from the city of Leitmeritz, overlooking the Langengasse street (p.583).

The feature of the implementation of the category of reference in messages on forums is also manifested in terms of spatial localization. Forum participants are most often not required to indicate the address of residence or stay. Only some users of the *Helles-Köpfchen.de* website indicate their place of residence when registering: “Jethro (15) from Frankfurt am Main”; “Bluberry (15) from Hessen”, “MasterXJanX (19) from the Ruhr area”, “Happy *-* from Berlin (19)” (*Where Did You Meet Your Friends*, 2016). The forum site *bke-Jugendberatung.de* does not contain information about the place of residence of its members.

It should also be noted that in most cases the anonymous nature of communication on forums is expressed in the generalized (not specific) designations of the places of the events described, using the

modifiers of place: at home, at school, in a summer camp, etc. Thus it's hardly possible to establish a specific localization of the reported fact (address or geographic location).

6.3. Representation of the category of modality in authentic text

As it was shown above, it's important to describe the essence of authentic text through its correlation with reality, which is traditionally referred to as the objective modality function expressed by the category of mood. The basis of authentic text is a narrative indicative or reflective modality (Rudnev, 1996):

An indicative statement is connected with reality by mutual dependence, i.e., coordinated with it. Any statement pretends to be true, even when a person says "I'm lying" <...>, therefore, for the speaker it is always important to have a clear correspondence between the statement and reality (p. 29).

Reflection in this case involves observing over reality, which can be both objective (the external world with respect to the subject of utterance) and subjective (the inner world of the subject of utterance).

In case of authentic text, reflective modality marks the coherence of the text with the real world (objective and subjective), which determines the use of the factual narrative mode. This mode involves the presentation of only what is known to the subject of the statement (including with reference to the source of information). In this case, the appeal of the author of the text to the inner world of the subject of utterance is possible only under the homodiegetic narrative mode, according to Genette (1998), i.e., when the author of the text tells about himself. If the author is narrating about another person (heterodiegetic mode of narration) he should avoid penetrating into the inner world of another person. The heterodiegetic regime in this case involves only an external description of actions, without interpretation of their motives, i.e. the author of the text should limit himself to addressing objective reality, the outside world. When trying to describe the inner world of another person, the motives of his actions, etc. he needs to accompany his statement with presumption, or refer to the source from which the author draws information (p. 396). This requirement is imposed by the factual mode of narration in order to comply with the principle of authenticity, otherwise there is a feeling of fiction – in contrast to the narrator of the fictitious text, the author of the authentic text cannot be omniscient.

Since no specifics has been identified in the implementation of the category of modality in the studied varieties of authentic text, we can give as an example the excerpt from the forum post of Lesemaus (2018):

I met my former longtime friend in primary school, we became friends in the 4th grade. I know I cried all night long when we went to different schools. Since 8th grade, after we had not seen each other during the summer holidays, she started to ignore me and doesn't answer when I call or speak to her. There was never been any argument or anything. I don't know why she is like that as she doesn't talk to me (para.2).

As you can see, the author is rather expressive declaring that she does not know why her friend behaves this way (“I don't know why she is like that”), and she doesn't even prompt to explain it. At the same time, the author describes her own reaction to breaking up with a friend (“I cried all night long”), and gives the reason for such a behavior (“when we went to different schools”). Here we can observe the case of the factual narrative mode, since the appeal to the inner world of the subject of utterance is represented in an authentic text with a homodiegetic mode of storytelling (narration about oneself).

7. Conclusion

As a result of the study of different kinds of authentic text, a set of categories reflecting its essential features has been identified. The category of personality in authentic text is characterized by the combination of its author and narrator as one person, who is real. In messages on forums it's hard to provide authentication of the author's personality, due to anonymous nature of communication. However, it contains a great number of details of the personal lives of the authors that suggests dealing with real personalities. The category of reference marks the correlation of the text with the real world – with objective chronological time (marking the moment of the author's speech, which helps identify temporal localization of the reported fact), real places (where the author of the message stays, and the described events occur), real participants of communication (both meant and described by the text). The study also revealed specifics of implementation of the category of reference in such authentic texts as messages on forums with their anonymous nature affecting the way of designating locations which is rather generalized, but not specific. However, the study didn't reveal any specifics of implementation of the category of modality in the form of reflection of the author of text over reality. In each of the variety of text, the factual narrative mode is observed, which allows applying the truth/false criterion to the information presented in the text. The studied categories can be considered as integral and differential features when classifying a text as authentic in order to separate it from a fictitious one, as well as from other types of documentary text.

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