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LINGUOSEMIOTIC ORGANIZATION OF HETEROGENEOUS TEXTS (CASE STUDY OF MEDIA AND INTERNET TEXTS)

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Abstract

The purpose of this work is to study heterogeneous screen texts of different subjects of the modern media sphere and the Internet, as well as highlighting the peculiarities of their linguistic and semiotic organization. The main content of the study is the analysis of polycode mono- and polymodal texts of different subjects. The study showed that the use of heterogeneous screen structures for the presentation of information contributes to the already established virtualization of modern life. Thus, the web page is a hybrid of polycode, polymodal text and hypertext, which gives it the opportunity to influence a single stream of the recipient, fixing in the mind, along with neutral information pragmatically valuable to the author. Several years ago, the average website on the Internet was a statically creolized text combining verbal and iconic components, and today it can be designated as a full-fledged heterogeneous structure uniting all possible types of text existence – audiovisual (video recordings), homogeneous verbal (texts of documents, etc.), homogeneous iconic (photo collections), polycode. It is characteristic of human physiological level to perceive colors, sound and many graphic forms equally. Visual representation gives the recipient more confidence, because what he or she sees is more quickly and easily accepted as truth, causing less fear. The concept of verbal and non-verbal components expands the semantics of the text, and the represented reality becomes three-dimensional; non-verbal units act as the connecting material of the verbal component of the text, which allows not bringing it to a tense semiotic minimum.

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Keywords: Heterogeneous text, polycode text, polymodal text, monomodal text, verbal component, nonverbal component.



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1. Introduction

The means of fixing, transmitting, storing data remotely and giving this data a timeless character has traditionally been such a symbolic system as writing, which has evolved from the cave writing to the "digital" writing. The society has entered the epoch of digital writing, electronic, which allows us to quickly obtain the necessary information and through which modern world culture is no longer based on a book, but on a screen form of text. Both the text itself and the "screen form" of its existence are widely understood. We adhere to Lotman's point of view that "all life is a text", and by the screen form of a text we mean the presentation of heterogeneous texts in the form of both cinema and TV media texts and complex polycode text structures of the Internet with hypertext potential.

2. Problem Statement

Texts generated and existing in digital format, besides the combination of semiotically heterogeneous elements, are characterized by the simplicity of extracting data from them, which is provided by modern technology and distinguishes them from handwritten and printed texts. The technical mediocrity of screen texts, as well as their syncretic nature, allows them to affect almost all of the recipient's senses at the same time. The combination of verbal and non-verbal means makes it possible to include peripheral attention systems in the process of interpreting texts, providing information redundancy of the message, which requires less effort in its perception.

Modern linguists are exploring different aspects of semiotically heterogeneous screen texts. For example, we have extensively studied Twitter microblog texts as techno-social practices of recreating national identity in a virtual environment (Shahin & Huang, 2019), their linguistic and semiotic characteristics (Asmus, 2019), and highlighted thematic clusters (Wu & Mai, 2019). Texts of the media scene are also studied in terms of digital communication and psychological health (Liu et al., 2019), meditation of modern life and re-creation of reality through technology and open access to information through the Internet (Cui, 2019). We consider media texts of different genres and the reflection of media communicative universals in them (Bolotnova, 2017), and highlight the lexical characteristics of thematic dominants (Voskoboynikov, 2016). We pay attention to the semiotic dynamics of the text in the aspect of the development and change of the basic postulates of literature (Kroó & Torop, 2018) and the reflection of gender in it. (Duffy & Hund, 2019).

3. Research Questions

In this paper we consider texts of different thematic orientation with a complicated semiotic nature – heterogeneous (polycode mono- and polymodal). Heterogeneous text in this paper is understood as a semiotically heterogeneous unity that has a complex effect on the recipient. In such a polycode text, the combination of both verbal and non-verbal components generates a common sense of the message and represents an interconnected structure. The process of perception and interpretation of a heterogeneous (polycode) screen text may include one perceptual channel of information perception. In particular, it may include several visual and auditory components, and therefore it may be mono- or polymodal, respectively.

The number of texts of this type is growing exponentially every day, representing an open set, so the research material was limited to heterogeneous media texts and Internet texts belonging to different thematic clusters (economics, diplomacy, entertainment, etc.).

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this work is to characterize the peculiarities of lingvo-semiotic organization of syncretic screen texts of modern media and Internet.

5. Research Methods

Given the complex structure of the phenomenon under study, methods and techniques of interdisciplinary analysis were applied in the process of the study. In order to internally organize and regulate the study process and to transform the results obtained, the following methods were used: general scientific methods of observation, classification, interpretation of results, philosophical and generalological methods and techniques of analysis, absolutization, abstraction; approaches of linguopragmatics explaining the choice of a particular structure of a heterogeneous text, the method of linguosemiotic commenting.

6. Findings

The Internet models life in electronic form, so the screen texts generated in its semiotic space reflect all aspects of human existence: domestic, social, cultural, political, economic, etc.

The main distinctive feature of heterogeneous screen texts is a purposeful combination of thematic fields. This is achieved by the fact that almost every web page is not just a static creolized text, but a hybrid of polycode, polymodal text and hypertext, i.e. it has a heterogeneous structure, which makes it possible to influence the recipient in a single stream, fixing in his mind not only neutral, but also pragmatically valuable information for the author.

For example, the structure of electronic systems such as Yandex, Rambler, Mail.ru, Gazeta.ru, etc., as well as social networks allow the user not only to request or receive information in the course of interpersonal communication, but also to acquire additional information..

Let us turn to the main page of Yandex, which combines different types of heterogeneous texts: blogs, news, video, photo, maps, mail, advertising. On the one hand, this is a typical structure of a search engine, and on the other – a demonstration of the very essence of any project on the Internet. Each link – a separate cognitive field in the process of contamination with others within a single hypertext. Gorina (2010) calls such a structure cognitive interaction. Such organization of the material simplifies the perception of information by the recipient. All set of spheres is perceived by it not as a heterogeneous set, but as a uniform system which even at division keeps integrity as always refers to other cognitive spheres, sites, uses repetitions that the addressee saw and understood, how many possibilities are in the given system (Gorina, 2010).

Thanks to the presentation of information in the format of heterogeneous screen structures, the virtualization of modern life is gradual, adapting members of society to new conditions. Let us consider

lingvo-semiotic features of such heterogeneous texts touching upon such aspects of reality as economics, diplomacy and entertainment.

For example, speaking about the digital economy (eCommerce), it should be noted that in addition to the virtualization of supply, demand, product, money, the Internet is a polycode (visual and linguistic) simulation of the familiar trading spaces of the real world on the portals of large commercial Internet sites. For example, the site of portal Amazon implicitly repeats the structure of a supermarket. Its interface is saturated with cart/basket icons; departments; orders; today's deals; gift cards, etc., which allows you to project an image of a department store from real life, where you can choose a department, consider the desired goods, leave the order, find a good deal, buy a gift card, etc. Registration on the site can be equated to a loyalty card, as the customer profile accumulates points for the purchase that can be spent. The buyer can choose to pay by card or in cash when the product is delivered. Obviously, this creates a polycode virtual image of the actions that people are used to.

Through the heterogeneous texts of the Internet, lexical units that have emerged as a result of the transfer of traditional forms of economic interaction in the virtual space have penetrated into the economy. Thus, the concepts of electronic market, electronic commerce, network economy, virtual product, virtual production, virtual bank, networked economy, e-market, e-business, e-commerce, economy, e-bank, virtual organization have appeared.

Consumption is also reflected in heterogeneous screen texts, such as online advertising. Its main advantages can be considered as growth of audience of potential consumers and interactivity of interactions of the seller (advertiser) and the buyer. There was a transfer of existing kinds of advertising from real to the virtual world, as a result of which such heterogeneous texts as banner advertising (banners) (analogue of "stretch marks" and / or billboards); spam (spam), mailing lists (analogue of the leaflet, which is unfolded in a mail box), etc. are widespread. In addition, there are new advertising opportunities through hidden links, placement of proposals in social networks, contextual advertising, pop-up windows, services of popular bloggers, etc. So on the Internet, modern advertising texts outline various codes (verbal, visual, audio, etc.) and modality (visual and auditory).

This semiotic situation has enriched the vocabulary of the English language, which included such terms as push mail (sending to e-mail addresses); click farm (people for a small fee, clicking on an ad to increase its rating); pre-roll (advertising to video on the Internet); minisite (advertising site dedicated to one product); viralmarketing (Internet advertising that users get without realizing it). In addition, a circle of specialists engaged in economic activity on the Internet was formed, the nomination of which arose according to the models described above: digital nomad (a person who uses a laptop and accesses a wireless network to work remotely); e-tailer (a person who trades online); e-lancertelecommute (a person working online); bloggeratti (blogger with high blog attendance and a large number of subscribers); spammer (cnamep); virtual office (online office remote working) etc.

Similar trends are typical for other areas of modern life. Thus, heterogeneous screen texts in combination with hypertext contribute to the fact that much is changing in the surrounding linguistic reality, including in those areas of language where previously it was supposed to restrain emotions, to present only verified facts, to cherish status and image (Belyakov, 2019). Since not all information coming from outside is presented in an explicit form, the perceiving subject is forced to compare the

information received with his own experience, and in the case of multicultural diplomatic communication, for example, to compare it with his own experience..

With the emergence of so-called "open", "digital", "twitter diplomacy", when much of what is happening in this, previously closed to the general public, the field has become available to anyone who has access to the Internet, and the way of information – digital. Nowadays, almost all foreign policy agencies of the world have official websites, which are heterogeneous polycode structures that have changed significantly in recent years. The Russian Foreign Ministry is represented both in Russian (VKontakte) and foreign social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube, Periscope, Flickr, Telegram, Viber), where there are special rules for sending messages. Let us consider some lingvo-semiotic peculiarities of the existence of heterogeneous texts of the Russian Foreign Ministry. Metamorphoses that have occurred recently in the presentation of information in digital format on official sites are significant, if ten years ago the site, already being a polycode (which combined the actual verbal and iconic components, mainly in the form of photographs and the use of other semiotic codes (colors, graphics, etc.)). Now, using the abovementioned terminology, it is, in fact, a full-fledged heterogeneous media text, since it has all the characteristics inherent in media text plus developed hypertextuality. The modern official website presents all possible types of text existence – audio-visual (video recordings of press conferences, briefings, speeches of the Minister, etc.). Homogeneous verbal texts (texts of documents, articles, etc.), homogeneous iconic texts (photo collections), polycode texts (verbal texts including video and photo materials), a special feature of the Russian Foreign Ministry's website, which distinguishes it from sites of similar agencies of other states, is a column dedicated to 'fake-news'. The appearance of such a column with examples of publications with inaccurate information about Russia and their refutations was determined pragmatically – inaccurate (fake) information appears regularly. It was important that any visitor to the site could immediately pay attention to this column, respectively; it was justified to use various means of creolization. The most striking semiotic marker of negative assessment in case of presentation of unreliable information by other sources is the image of a large, immediately attracting attention, rectangular red and white stamp with the word 'Fake', no longer requiring translation, because it has steadily entered the Russian language – 'lie'.

The Russian Foreign Ministry's Twitter account also differs in part from the standard polycode media text in this social network in that it not only provides information presented to important authors, but also provides analytics, assessment in polycode form. An important marker with an implicit assessment, which can be called a photomorph, is a photograph of a Russian citizen, Maria Butina, who was in an American prison, with the #FreeMariaButina hashtag, used as a profile photo (avatar), which also contains additional creolization – the word Free is highlighted in red, which immediately attracts attention. This photo serves as an avatar in the main social networks on the MFA page – Facebook, VKontakte, Twitter, Instagram, Viber, which is not typical for official sites and adds a hidden connotational meaning. Just like on the site, tweets of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs use the above described marker of unreliable information (fake) with hyperlinks to both the source of fake information and the source with reliable data on a particular issue (for example, a tweet from 16.10.19 about a "copy" of the site of the Russian embassy in the Republic of Korea, to which the embassy is not related, and provides the current address of the site).

The semiotic space of sphere of entertainments also is characterised by various screen texts, the most difficult of them – video texts where various codes (verbal, visual, audio, etc.) and modality (visual and auditory) are combined simultaneously. Let's consider some features of such texts on Internet platforms YouTube and Instagram. Video texts placed on YouTube in the letsplay genre (the process of passing a computer game on video with comments), review (review and analysis of one or more objects – goods, services, movies, real persons, etc.), prank (prank), training videos, log (the author's story about his life), dialogue (the presenter answers the questions of his subscribers), trolling interviews (interviews to ridicule the interlocutor), as part of his story do not have such imaginative and visual units, cinemorphs that would communicate the text connotational meaning, expanding and complementing the meaning conveyed verbally. Texts of live recordings published on the online platform Instagram, Vkontakte, Facebook and other social networks in the format of stories also represent reality "here and now", i.e. exclusively its denotative plan, without singling out any cinemorphs in the continuum of movement. In the texts of these genres the only tangible attitude is the coexistence in the space of objects, consistently represented in the image. Video texts in the sketch genre have an artistic orientation, in the simulated reality of which the figurative and visual units that carry additional meanings, i.e. cinemorphs, as, for example, in a sketch shot in the style of the musical "How Hard It Is to Grow Up" (UNIVER TV, 2016). The gestures and behavior of the characters in the comedy sketch copy the typical movements typical for actors in a musical telling the hard fate of the protagonist, with the only difference being that they are more exaggerated and pretentious, which, together with the lyrics of the song, creates a comic effect.

Sketches published on Instagram platform differ from YouTube sketches by time frame – they are shorter, like, for example, comedy video publications of blogger Olga Medynich "Instagram, my love". Thus, in the 12th series the author talks about the comments to her sketches. The video begins with the words: "It seems to me that when I put up a video in Instagram, it gets to the Odessa market", followed by footage, where the author "revives" his acting comments of users (Medynich, 2016). Then in the video text there is a Jewish folk song, on the background of which all the characters are shown again in an accelerated format, and at the end Olga appears with a toy drill, brought to the temple, and then pulls a T-shirt over her head, which is also a cinemorphism, meaning "you have a headache" and "want to hide", respectively. In order to achieve a comic effect in the short period of time allotted by Instagram to publish the video, the author accompanies the verbal component with numerous cinemorphs, which "enlivens" the spoken words and affects the quality of the text, giving it a greater semiotic density.

7. Conclusion

The linear way of thinking and perception has been replaced by hyper-conception – it's a mosaic thinking. This statement is associated with the growth of means of communication and information acquisition on the Internet with the help of modern devices: smartphones, tablets, laptops, which have changed the information-communication and perceptual capabilities of man. The text is now a combination of semiotically heterogeneous components and hypertext elements, a complex structural formation in which the contamination of verbal and non-verbal units generates one visual, structural, semantic and functional whole, the purpose of which is a complex pragmatic influence on the recipient. As it is known, a person is able to perceive colors, sound signals and many graphic forms equally at the

physiological level. That is why the natural output in the multimodal environment becomes the use of common for mankind semiotic codes for transfer of the information. That it is possible to explain non-verbal, as a rule, and it is explained. Visually perceived information, "impressions of eye", in opinion of researchers, causes in the recipient more trust – that we see, faster and easier is accepted as the truth, causes less fears. Besides, non-verbal units, creating semiotic space of the screen, act as a connecting material of verbal composition.

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