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ON SPIRITUAL SAFETY AND LINGUISTIC ENVIRONMENT OF SOCIETY

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Abstract

The article examines linguistic safety which is one of the aspects of the spiritual safety problem of the individual, society, and state. It is being noted that the media, including the Internet, undoubtedly have an impact on a spiritual atmosphere in society: mass content characterized by a wide level of accessibility, allows an individual to operate with various information, as well as to form an assessment of certain events, phenomena of reality. In this regard, state media representatives, information sites administrators, bloggers, authors of individual Internet pages are responsible both for spiritual safety (formation of creative spirituality and favourable conditions for spiritual life, protection of spiritual interests and needs of individuals, social groups, political institutions) and for the language ecology, that is the preservation of language as a means of effective communication, the accumulation of socially significant national and cultural information, and its transfer to subsequent generations of speakers. Spiritual safety requires strengthening the fight against extremism which acts as a threatening factor for the entire world community. That is why linguistic studies related to the identification of extremism signs in oral and written texts distributed in the media, in particular in the process of agitation, propaganda of an extremist-oriented organization, group are relevant. Modern communication demonstrates various mechanisms of verbal influence. The media use them to create texts of different author's intent, communicative orientation, and theme.

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Keywords: Appeal, linguistic environment, speech manipulation, spiritual safety, propaganda, verbal manipulation.



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1. Introduction

The problem of spiritual safety of society and the individual is one of the major problems of our time. It has been debated a lot in academic literature. According to the Public Safety Concept of the Russian Federation (2013) the notion of safety is defined as “the state of security of a person and a citizen, material and spiritual values of society from criminal and other unlawful infringements, social and ethnic conflicts, as well as from natural and man-made disasters” (Kontseptsiya obshchestvennoi bezopasnosti v Rossiyskoj Federatsii, 2003, p. 1).

In this regard, it is legitimate to say not only that national security of Russia depends on the development of new approaches to arms control, but also that this problem is much broader. It involves some new aspects that have not yet been developed by scientists. They include the problem of linguistic security, which is based on the study of aspects of the 'collective unconscious' that forms the mentality and the individual, and some cultural, historical, social, ethnic community (Kudinova et al., 2018). The 'collective unconscious' cannot be observed directly, it can be examined by indirect methods, and above all through language. A special role in building a spiritual atmosphere in society is played by the media.

According to modern researchers, our worldview is only 10% based on our own experience, everything else we learn from books, films, media and the Internet. Thus, today the media, which affect the collective consciousness, world perception and culture type are the main source of collective knowledge. The relevance of the problem stated in the article is due to the fact that in the modern era of 'the total information society' the articles in mass media acquire strategic importance, contributing to the assessment of the surrounding reality, influencing public consciousness and modelling the corresponding worldview. Information impact of mass media on collective consciousness can have both positive and negative effects. In this regard, the professional competence of the journalists, their ethics and responsibility to society are of particular importance.

2. Problem Statement

In 1994 in Germany a book called "Grundwissen Medien" ("Basics of Mass Media") by Werner Faulstich was published. The author noted that "competence in the field of mass media is becoming a central task related to the spiritual and social environment of our society" (Faulstich, 1994). In the same year, an article called "Language, society and culture of speech (ecology and language)" by L.I. Skvorcov was published in the first issue of "Russian language at school" magazine. Thus, the problem, which has become one of the key problems of the XXI century was formulated at the same time in different countries and languages.

In academic literature, where the language and discourse of modern media are being analysed, there has been a discussion on a new direction of research – social ecology, studying the interaction between society and the environment (Shlyakhov & Nikonov, 2011). Since language existence defines a special area of human existence, it is legitimate to say about the linguistic environment of society, the environmental aspect of the information and communications technologies (Ionova, 2016; Sirotinina, 2013; Volodina, 2011). Thus, the dynamic development of traditional media, the emergence of new computer information technologies, the globalization of the world information space have a significant impact on the production

and distribution of words. All these complex and comprehensive processes require not only scientific understanding but also the development of new paradigms of practical study of the language of the media and the Internet.

3. Research Questions

The real conditions of modern communication impose certain requirements on the participants of verbal communication. When information is being transferred, the principle of speech safety is of great importance. Essentially, a speaker must be aware of the responsibility they bear for each of their speech actions, as well as during the implementation of one of the civil rights – freedom of speech.

The relevance of modern linguistic research aimed at studying the verbal impact mechanisms is beyond dispute, since speech manipulation is a special way of communication.

Generally, *speech manipulation* is a voluntary and involuntary transfer of information by a speaker to a listener in the process of verbal communication in oral and written forms, which is carried out through linguistic, paralinguistic and non-linguistic symbolic means and is determined by the conscious and unconscious communicative intention of a speech addresser, as well as the purposes of communication. A narrow interpretation of *speech manipulation* correlates it with the impact of a speaker's speech on the other person and distinct goals of a speaker, which include changing the personal meaning about a particular object for a recipient, the restructuring of categorical structures of consciousness, behavioural changes, mental health (Shelestyuk, 2009).

The impact on public consciousness is carried out primarily within mass media discourse, which is inevitably followed up by manipulative technologies as a kind of impact technologies. According to Michalskaya (2001), at the beginning of the XXI century, the function of public opinion manipulation displaces all "classical" functions of mass media — informational, controlling, educational, etc.

As per Leontiev (2003), the effectiveness of manipulation (or "deceiving") depends on several reasons. They include the level of addresser and the addressee's awareness, the ability to verify the message validity (the verification), the addressee's trust level to the source, and the addressee's level of intelligence. However, these are ultimately special techniques and methods of manipulating the consciousness of the audience. They include the suppression of facts, misinformation, and blatant falsification of events.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to research how the mass media and the Internet use language mechanisms to influence the individual and public consciousness, in particular, the specific methods of speech manipulation in the articles.

5. Research Methods

The following general scientific methods were used in the study: synthesis, analysis, comparison of language materials; descriptive method, which includes observation, generalization and classification. The study of speech material through the use of proper linguistic methods allowed us to obtain objective results. Identification of the author's message, communicative goals and intentions, implemented in the texts in

explicit and implicit forms and aimed at influencing an addressee of speech, was carried out in the course of linguistic-pragmatic analysis. Along with that, we used lexical-semantic and formal-grammatical analysis to establish the linguistic meaning and determine actual speech meaning of the statements; methods of semantic and thematic fields were used to group units with similar substantive properties; content analysis helped us to identify semantic significance of quantitative characteristics of the phenomena of the text; linguistic-stylistic analysis was conducted to determine the genre peculiarities of the texts and characteristics of speech means and methods of influence. The analysis of suggestive potential of texts included the description of lexical, word-formative, morphological and syntactic means of its design.

6. Findings

Traditionally, in the course of studying the essence and content of the process of verbal influence, researchers distinguish three main methods: persuasion, suggestion and infection. Stepanov (2008) characterizes them in the following way: 1) persuasion or argument "relies on the logic of verbal statements when the relevant laws are considered, which is based on the rationality assumptions of the process of deducing new information using a special (logical) reasoning – arguments", 2) suggestion contemplates "conscious unreasonable impact on a person or group of people" to change their status, attitude and create a predisposition to action, 3) the infection is due to the fact that a speaker "shows actual or skilfully simulated psychological state to cause (provoke) a listener's psychological state similar to the one demonstrated". Thus, of particular importance in the description of speech manipulation is the correlation of phenomena, and categories of linguistic and psychological plan since through the use of language elements (the choice and special organization, including composition), special psychological conditions are often created, against which a listener uncritically perceives information. As a result, this can lead to significant changes in the behaviour of an addresser of the manipulation, and then in the goals, motives, attitudes of their verbal and non-verbal activities.

The analysis of speech manipulation contemplates the definition of a type of interaction of a subject with an object. Therefore, one may talk of direct manipulation, when a speaker directly says to an interlocutor (listener, reader, spectator) about their desires or demands; and of indirect manipulation, when an addresser of the speech veils their intentions (Zheltukhina, 2004).

To counteract the spread of extremism in society, researchers face the problem of a comprehensive study of modern speech outreach works of political and ideological nature, containing elements of verbal extremism. In this respect, specialists face a certain difficulty with materials that have the signs of verbal manipulation, "of veiling extremist appeals by pseudo-patriotic slogans, the use of covert propaganda, special compositional techniques together with visual arts, computer graphics, animation, video clips, etc." (Galyashina, 2009). Manipulation (as a type of verbal manipulation) is aimed at changing the verbal and non-verbal behaviour of an addressee by inducing them to perform specific actions, and in such way that the influence exerted on an object of manipulation is not realized on their part: the actions of an addressee are notable for rashness and may conflict with their point of view. Hence, O.S. Issers compare speech manipulation with suggestion, setting it against persuasion: "if persuasion is carried out mainly based on the consciousness, the mind of the recipient, then the suggestion is carried out based on emotions. Suggesting a certain idea, a subject of speech manipulation appeals, first of all, to the emotions of an object

of speech manipulation, thereby seeking to bring them into the right psychological state for a speaker" (as cited in Denisyuk, 2003, p.51).

Overall, verbal manipulation is aimed to form certain preferences, tastes, needs, prejudices, stereotypes that are beneficial to a manipulator. Sternin (2001) specifies the main goals of a subject of speech manipulation, which reflect the general goals of verbal communication: 1) phatic – establishing, renewing, maintaining, developing, preserving contact; 2) objective – receiving or giving something; 3) informative – communicating or obtaining information. It should be noted that the manipulation is implemented when an addressee cannot recognize in the real message transmitted by an interlocutor intentionally veiled information.

Tarasov (1990) describes speech manipulation from the point of realization of mass communicative act as communication in the system of mass media or propaganda speech directly in front of the audience. According to the researcher, to be a subject of speech manipulation means to regulate the activities of their interlocutor, i.e., with the help of speech to encourage another person to start, change, complete any activity or create readiness to commit an action if necessary. Thus, the concept of *inducement* is of great importance. According to Ivannikov (1985), it should be considered as "situational formations that are direct causes that initiate activity" and are formed "as a result of a special process of their construction considering external and internal circumstances". Inducement is 1. impulse, desire to execute something; need to do something. 2. forcing someone to act, do something (Efremova, 2000).

Speech manipulation is implemented in verbal communication, which consists of specific speech acts when the speech goal and the content of the entire speech work are inconsistent. It is found both in interpersonal communication and in mass communication, and in the latter case, verbal manipulation is more systematic and seamless. Parshin (2000) considers speech manipulation from this point of view: according to him, it is an influence on an individual and / or the collective consciousness and behaviour, carried out by a variety of speech means, i.e. through messages in natural language. In this regard, motivational speech acts are studied. Depending on to what exactly an addressee of speech is inclined it is generally to differentiate: 1) "appeal, agitation and threat as persuasion when one needs to perform certain actions"; 2) "propaganda as persuasion when one needs to change opinion, accept, or consider the point of view, beliefs, attitude", 3) persuasion as a special kind of propaganda when one needs to be dismissive to a subject of speech (Kukushkina, Safonov, & Serai, 2011).

The most common among these motivational speech acts is appeal, its most complete definition is given by Baranov (2013):

It is a speech act to induce an addressee to perform some action or a set of actions interpreted as an important part of socially significant activity contributing to the achievement of certain ideals, or to induce an addressee to consider in their daily behaviour these ideals, and a speaker and an addressee are either political subjects or their representatives, and the speech act itself is considered as part of socio-political communication. (p. 420)

We have undertaken a study of speech manipulation techniques, methods of linguistic expression of the acts of inducement in texts characterized by outreach or socio-political focus (also refer (Fomina, 2016). The study of the language material showed that the main means of expressing the act of inducement is the imperative, i.e. the verb in the imperative mood: *"Just think about it – to turn your life upside-down!!!"; "...so do not be lazy to develop every aspect of your lifestyles"; "Remind me, because you are only a reminder!"*. In the proper sense, the imperative mood performs a specific appellative function, which is not peculiar to other verb forms, and each motivational statement occurs in certain conditions: in an order, the imperative mood is aimed at forcing an addressee to do something, to do will of a subject of speech.

In the text the act of inducement is also found when there are units of necessity, combined with the infinitives expressing obligation: *"In this case, a person deals with a huge number of difficulties and challenges that they need to overcome"; "Next, we need to understand what prevents this quality from coming through us and start to eliminate the cause of it"; "...you need to learn to clearly express your thoughts, to express a particular point of view, to declare yourself the evidence that convinced not only your interlocutor but also yourself"* (need – evaluation characteristics of something that needs to be done, something that one should possess (Efremova, 2000, p. 123).

In constructions with the meaning of a request, references are often used, which make the inducement softer, more emotional, and therefore more effective. References in the studied texts are often expressed through naming of social, religious groups and units characterizing an addressee: *"And we, Muslims, the people who carry the call, need to have this quality so that our call is carried out in the best way possible"; "We call to our brothers who were captured and tortured"*. More often than not, the act of inducement appears in the form of a plea and is even more emotionally expressive than a request, i.e., manifests the inducement in a more intense form: *"O Allah! Please us, give and take from us what You will be pleased with, make us of those who deserve Your promise, Your victory and help, and make us vicegerents on Earth"; "the Almighty! Take his hand and lead him to the truth. the Almighty! Take his hand and lead him to victory! Take his hand and lead him to strengthening and spreading of Islam. the Almighty! Make him the first righteous caliph of our time"*. In case of verbal manipulation of a religiously minded addressee's consciousness, a plea plays a special role, since its purpose is to induce an object of manipulation to act / not to act (Searle, 1986). E.I. Belyaeva considers the nature of the plea impact on an interlocutor and refers it to speech acts, "which induce action committed in the interests of a speaker" (Belyaeva, 1992) (cf.: *plea* - 'a passionate request'; *request*– '1. an appeal to someone, calling to satisfy any desires of a requester' (Efremova, 2000, p. 199). Thus, the manipulative nature of the speech act of a plea, acting as a component of the conflictogenic text, is revealed when an author, appealing to the religious feelings of an opponent, conducts on their basis specific ideas that are beneficial to themselves. Supporting Khazimullina's (2013) point of view, we regard plea as 1) "a manipulative request," the meaning of which is "I want you to do what I want, because God wants (commands) it", 2) "an appeal, indirectly addressed to people – potential subjects of an action" (p. 90). In linguistic terms, a plea-inducement is expressed by a number of syntactic constructions including 1) direct appeals to God (*Oh Allah!, the Almighty!*); 2) lexical repetitions (*make us, Take his hand*); 3) verbs in the imperative mood (*please, give, take, make, lead*).

Frequently, appeal is accompanied by *approval*, which reinforces the motivating potential of the text and increases its emotional background, since approval is a characterizing statement, which is based on the

recognition of valid, good, positive, laudable action (see *approval* – ‘an act of officially accepting something; positive feedback, praise’ (Modern dictionary of Russian language, 2005). In these materials, a person's actions according to the norms of Islamic religious tradition when an author of the speech work states correctness, importance and expediency of acts of Muslims are evaluated: *"...in this world the main concern of a Muslim is to live his or her life as required by Allah, to act in various situations according to the orders of Allah, not indulging in his or her passions, thereby obtaining the approval of Allah"; "the approval of Allah is possible only with full obedience to all of His laws without exception, both in worship – prayer, fasting, hajj, and in all other spheres of human life – social, economic, educational, as well as in matters of punishment, jihad, zakat, public relations, etc."*. Approval contains a reference to the authoritative opinion of "Allah", which has an impact on the religious consciousness of an addressee because while reading the text people start to believe in the received information and further are guided by it: *"...a Muslim ... must live his or her life in accordance with precepts of Allah, who alone knows what is first for us, what is the best and what is the most terrible."* As a matter of fact, approval as a positive example and appeal to authority are methods of speech manipulation, and therefore the above statements can be considered as a presupposition that determines the nature of the actions indicated in the text.

Motivational speech act with the meaning of advice is characterized by the fact that a manipulator allows the possibility of refusing to perform a specific action on the part of an addressee, i.e. the latter can accept the proposal of a speaker or reject it. Such semantics is revealed in the statement if the phrase contains the reasoning of advice: the context indicates for what reasons a listener should act in the opposite way to what they intended to do earlier. In particular, the meaning of advice is realized in complex sentences with subordinate clauses: *"...all Muslims must start to change such a pernicious situation if their senses are not yet dulled"; "and if governments and regimes are powerless to do so, or if they are happy with the situation and approve of it, then all Muslims as individuals must rise."* In some cases, inducement is not expressed explicitly, but accompanied by a warning, which leads to a softening of the semantics of the actual inducement: *"If such a movement cannot guide people, gain their trust, explain to them its methods of achieving the goal, draw people's attention to the plot of the infidels to split society, it itself will be in great danger"; "you must meet death with calmness, even with a smile, if you hesitate during a deadly battle and die, you will lose your degrees in Paradise."*

A warning-tinged inducement may contain the idea of a threat used to pressure an addressee of the speech by promising to harm them: *"In this world there are occupation and destruction by the enemy, and in the afterlife as a punishment there would be burning with fire"; "One who properly evaluate the role of the intellect and is guided by it is superior to the degree of angels and deserve the greatest reward, and the one who neglected them lowers oneself below every creature and condemn oneself to a painful punishment of hell."* A speaker "with their statement is trying to warn an interlocutor from actions that can harm him or her, while they are "intimidating" an addressee of the speech, promising to harm him or her if he or she does not follow their instructions, i.e., to justify the warnings possible consequences are being indicated" (Kharieva, 2011). Linguists observe certain difficulties in identifying the speech act of threat. In particular, within the written text it is quite difficult to distinguish between the expression of a speech act of threat and warning, in contrast to the oral form of speech work, when the researcher has the opportunity to evaluate the intonational potential of the statement (presence/absence of a threatening intonation). Vezhbickaya

(2007) as a differential feature of the described speech acts defines the components of the communicative plan: *'I will do it'*- a threat and *'it may happen'*- a warning.

In regards to semantics of inducement, propaganda seems to be quite "harmless" contrasted with threat. This speech act is associated with the distribution of information (ideas, beliefs, perceptions, inducement to action) which a) is expressed by verbal, written or audiovisual language means, aimed at a wide range of people, to influence on (or manipulate) the public consciousness and behaviour; b) involves a deliberate pre-selection of facts and arguments, and allows for the omission of several important facts, the distortion of some of them or the inclusion of false facts in a message; c) has the form of appeals, proclamations, teachings, advice, warnings, demands, threats (Sternin, 2010). It must be borne in mind that the activities which are promoted, initiated and encouraged by a speaker may be illegal. In this case, we are talking about the manifestation of so-called verbal extremism, which is characterised by target and motivational orientation with sufficient impact potential. Galyashina (2006) defines verbal extremism as:

A deliberate act of public messaging in the form of oral or written speech utterances; the urge or incite to implement, initiate, provoke or lead to illegal extremist actions; justify or validate them; promote Nazi or a similar confusingly symbols and attributes; they are aimed at inciting national, racial or religious enmity or hatred, including the transmission of information by linguistic means in public speeches, printed publications, the media (radio, television). (p. 32)

Such verbal and non-verbal actions are regulated by the Federal Law "On Countering Extremist Activity".

7. Conclusion

While studying the texts of outreach, socio-political focus in the media and the Internet we identified speech acts of inducement, among which, depending on what exactly inclines an addressee of speech, there are appeal, agitation, threat, propaganda and persuasion. The analysis of the language material showed that the imperative mood prevails among the means of expressing the act of inducement. The frequency expressions of inducement are the following: 1) units of necessity and obligation; 2) references, which refer to social or religious group and characterize an addressee; 3) direct appeals to God; 4) lexical repetitions. Within the study of suggestive texts of media and the Internet, we found out motivational acts with the meaning of request, plea, advice, warning, threat and propaganda. In the mass media texts, there were some other types of acts of inducement, in particular, with the semantics of demand and prohibition. Overall, the description of speech manipulation language markers allows us to understand how a manipulative act of inducement can be carried out against speakers.

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