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**NEWSPAPER NARRATIVE AS COMMUNICATIVE ACTION:  
NEOGRICE APPROACH**

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*Abstract*

The article proposes a comprehensive multidimensional interpretation of the ontological status of a journalistic newspaper narrative within an alternative to the Cooperative Grice Principle spread in traditional pragmalinguistics, which is included in the theoretical and methodological toolkit of modern theory of speech activity called neogricianism. The focus of the research interest of the author of this article includes Levinson's maxims, since on the one hand, they are focused on the multi-subject nature of verbal communicative action, and, on the other hand, they represent an economical coding model not only of oral but also written communication, while Grice's maxims are traditionally applied to the analysis of oral dialogue. As an empirical material, the narrative "Surrogate alcohol poisoning in Siberia" was used from German newspapers ("Süddeutsche Zeitung", "Zeit", "Frankfurter Rundschau") and the Russian mass media (Izvestia, Trud, and Novaya Gazeta). The analysis of communicative actions in the newspaper narrative from the perspective of non-theologians suggests a conclusion about the relevance of the Q-principle, I-principle and M-principle as its transcendental basis, which is based on the interaction and self-organization in communicative pairs "author of the text (narrator) - reader", "the author of the text (narrator) is the described character" and "the described character is a reader".

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**Keywords:** Newspaper narrative, neogricianism, Q(Quantity)-principle, I(Informational value)- principle, M(Manner)- principle, communicative strategy.



## 1. Introduction

The issue of the representation of the universal laws of the generation of verbal communicative action is a key problem in modern theoretical linguistics. Grice tried to formulate the general rules for the creation of any kind of communication and reasonable human behavior by demonstrating the fact that the inappropriate use of individual words and propositions should be viewed as a violation of the general rules of language use relevant in the space of any discursive type. Such general rules Grice called the Cooperative Principle, which is intended to explicate the possibility of the most effective use of language for the rational creation of a communicative action. Within the framework of the Cooperative Principle, Grice singled out a series of maxims, which he related to four categories: Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Mode of Action (Grice, 1975).

## 2. Problem Statement

Introducing the concept of conversational maxims into scientific use, Grice correlated them with the ideal type of communication, where the interlocutors themselves observe all the cooperative postulates, and also expect the same from other communicants. However, in a real communicative activity “one can get around one or another postulate: do it covertly, by deceiving the interlocutor; openly ignore the postulates and principle of cooperation; get into a situation of conflict of postulates; to exploit some postulate - to violate it in such a way that the listener calculates his implicature inference (assuming that only the desire to convey a hidden meaning made the “ideal” cooperative speaker “in the default mode” violate one of the postulates” (Makarov, 2003).

It is necessary to note that Grice considered in his studies dialogic communication, primarily oral (Neale, 1992). In national studies, it is often emphasized that Grice’s maxims do not always act. Thus, a prominent Russian expert in the field of pragmalinguistics, N. Formanovskaya, believes that there is a special sphere of conflict communication, where Grice’s postulates are not relevant: “Communication is cooperative (zone of agreement) and conflict (zone of disagreement). In cooperative communication, each of the communicants contributes to achieve their goals. Thus, cooperative communication is constructive, fruitful. Conflict communication is destructive, positive results cannot be achieved in its area of operation (although it is possible to consider that each partner makes his “contribution”, takes a step towards achieving destructive results - abuse, quarrel, swearing, and many others”. (Formanovskaya, 2007). This researcher extrapolates Grice’s maxims, primarily on everyday interactions of people.

Thus, it is wrongful to interpret Grice’s maxims as physical laws, because in a number of sociocultural discourses they can be neutralized (Capone, 2006; Huang, 2015; Horn, 2005; Carston, 2005). However, at the same time, they “are not rules of etiquette, they do not prescribe norms of behavior, but only describe a system of rational expectations regarding the intentions and means of their implementation available to an interlocutor” (Dolgorukov, 2012). Thus, there is an ambivalent ontological essence of the analyzed phenomenon. Therefore, it seems reasonable to search for the ontological basis of Cooperative Principle. In this regard the authors proceed from the assumption of the transcendence of the phenomenon of interest. At the same time, transcendentalism means, first of all, external causes of being that go beyond the boundaries of the world in which we exist. On the one hand this formulation reduces the interpretation of the universality of Cooperative Principle as an analogy of physical laws; on the other hand, it retains the

status of the Grice's maxims in the context of their ability to generate cooperative interaction or serve as a kind of ideal vs. vs. falsified interpersonal communication.

### 3. Research Questions

Based on the above-mentioned attributes of Cooperative Principle, a more clarified parametrization of the maxims constituting it (Feng, 2013; Bethan, 2007) seems to be necessary, which is undertaken in the framework of the newest Neogrice concepts, which the authors will discuss in details. From the point of view of the authors, it is possible to extrapolate neogrice theory to any discourse, whether oral or written. In the last case, one should take into account the sociocultural background of the described communicative action, which every time modifies the interaction between parallel speech acts in different frames in the communicative dyads of "author of the text (narrator) – reader", "author of the text (narrator) - described character" and "described character - the reader". Although being not common the tradition of the application of conversational maxims to the analysis of a written text still occurs, primarily in foreign theoretical literature (Lindblom, 2001). In the modern research tradition, non-linguisticism means, first of all, the theory of implications proposed by Horn (1972), which can be derived from the first maxima of the informational value of Cooperative Principle: speak as informative as necessary. At the same time, Horn introduced Q (Quantity) - the principle and the R (Relation) principle. It means that a speaker should make his contribution to the production of the statement as informative as possible, taking into account the R-principle (relevance of the statement).

In addition, the theory of generalized conversational implicatures of Levinson (Levinson, 2000), which tries to transform Grice's postulates, is classified as non-linguistic: I, Q, M.: Q (Quantity) -principle, I (informational value) -principle, M (Manner) -principle. The principles of Levinson, in contrast to the Grice maxims, although they are close to the last in content, are focused not only on the speaker, but also on the listener. Taking into account the polychronotopic and animated nature of the newspaper narrative, associated with the synergy of speech influence in the communicative dyads of "author of the text (narrator) – reader", "author of the text (narrator) - described character" and "described character – reader", the authors takes as the optimal transcendental principle that organizes mass-media communication of exactly S. Levinson's maxims, since they, on the one hand, are focused on various subjects of verbal communicative action, and, on the other hand, they are characterized by an economical coding model of not only oral, but also written communication, while Grice's maxims are traditionally applied to the analysis of oral dialogue.

### 4. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this article is to study a newspaper narrative within the framework of the Neogrice theoretical framework, which provides an opportunity to interpret the Q-principle, I-principle and M-principle as a transcendental basis for communication in the press. As an empirical material, the narrative "Surrogate alcohol poisoning in Siberia" from the German newspapers ("Süddeutsche Zeitung" - 5 texts; "Zeit" - 1 text; "Frankfurter Rundschau - 2 texts) and the Russian mass media (Izvestia - 134 text ; "Trud" - 26 texts; "Novaya Gazeta" - 44 texts). The object of the image in this narrative was the tragic case of

poisoning with the “Boyaryshnik” tincture in Irkutsk in December 2016, as well as the public resonance of this event in Russian and German society.

## 5. Research Methods

The research methodology is presented by a synthesis of theoretical principles and methods for analyzing empirical material used in Russian and foreign linguistics. For the authors, the cooperative-activity interpretation of the object being studied is especially important, which involves studying the newspaper narrative from a neogrice position as a unique system that has developed in the course of cooperative activity of a combination of different actors (primarily journalists and politicians). In addition, it is intended to use:

- **comparative method** in the study of communication strategies that represent the Q-principle, I-principle and M-principle in the context of contrasting axiological assessments in Russian and German press;
- **situational-contextological** analysis, which is used in order to identify the relations of the communicative strategy with the discursive context in which it is involved;
- **semantic analysis** is used to characterize the ratio of axiological meanings of a newspaper narrative about poisoning by surrogate alcohol in Siberia and the ways of their language representation.

## 6. Findings

Let us turn to this empirical material in order to illustrate the main neogrice principles of the organization of newspaper communication:

**Q (Quantity) principle.** This principle is specified from the perspective of the subject of speech and the addressee:

Speaking person: Do not speak less than required or less than you know.

Addressee: What is not said, cannot take place, because the speaker gave the maximum information according to what he knows.

Based on the intention of the narrative subject (personal, collective or social), which determines the focus of coverage of the event, various manipulations associated with the amount of information reported are frequent: the aspects of communicative action that are significant for the newspaper communication subject are described in more detail, and the negative aspects of the narrative are avoided. Additional connotative shades with positive or negative signs, and, as a result, the addition strategy expresses great information. Let us consider these strategies in the narrative “Surrogate alcohol poisoning in Siberia”. The following example from the Russian newspaper “Izvestia”, in particular, specifies the number of the article from the Criminal Code, which has informative value only in the communicative dyad of “the author of the text (narrator) is a reader”, i.e. in Russian society, where this document can act as a legal justification for the actions of the authorities and the fight against counterfeit alcohol: Upon the fact of mass poisoning of people, the investigating authorities opened a criminal case under Part 3 of p. 238 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (“Sales of goods and products that do not meet safety requirements, causing the death of two or more persons by negligence”).

**A similar strategy can also be manifested in the communicative dyad space of “described character is a national reader”, for which information on technical conditions of toxic counterfeit alcohol is relevant: According to TASS, the head of the interregional management of Federal Service for Alcohol Market Regulation in the Siberian Federal District, the concentrate contains methyl alcohol and antifreeze. The fluid was produced in St. Petersburg according to TU 9158-007-46931608-01 (a document with this number does not exist).**

**In German press, the strategy of specifying explicates the information necessary for its recipients about the cost of “Boyaryshnik” tincture in the usual currency for a potential recipient: Die Opfer in Irkutsk hatten einen Badezusatz namens “Weißdorne” für 40 Rubel (etwa 62 Cent) getrunken, der mehr als 90 Prozent Alkohol enthält.**

Next, we will consider “addition” as a strategy for increasing the information content by selecting the lexeme from the synonymous series, which is associated with the information value of newspaper speech, because this process adds estimated information quanta to the proposition. So, in the title of an article from the German newspaper “Frankfurter Rundschau” “Saufen, egal was” (getting drunk, no matter what) the choice of lexeme “saufen” is intended to reflect the condemnation of drunkenness in Russia, which is confirmed by the following subtitle in this newspaper publication: *Wodka ist zu teuer, deshalb betrinken sich viele Russen mit allem, was Alkohol enthält. Selbst Nagellackentferner werden in Einzelfällen nicht verschmäht. Die Folgen sind oft tödlich - Vodka is too expensive; so many Russians get drunk with everything that contains alcohol. In some cases, even nail polish remover is used. The consequences are often fatal.*

A similar strategy to condemn alcoholism with the help of a bold lexeme with negative connotation is also presented in the Russian “Novaya Gazeta” issue: *There was such a “Nithinol”. Then - all kinds of “fanfuriki”: 100 ml of pharmaceutical tincture for 20-25 rubles. There were a lot of things. And there are. And, apparently, there will, Amen.* The explication of the Q (Quantity) principle is also connected with the use of a strategy of distancing from negative facts from the point of view of the subject of the narration in a newspaper publication. Such an assessment manifests additional information quanta. At the same time, the character of the narrative itself addresses the reader (the dyad of “the described character is the reader”), and the journalist distances himself from his words, leading the communication in the dyad of “the author of the text (narrator) is the described character”. Thus, the words of one of the pensioners from the Irkutsk residential district Novo-Lenino about a good quality of “Boyaryshnik” are alien to a German journalist from Frankfurter Rundschau, and therefore he distances himself from them using direct speech: *“Ist doch ein normales Getränk, besser als mancher Wodka, der 300 Rubel (knapp 6 Euro) kostet. Glauben Sie mir, ich habe schon alles Mögliche probiert.”* - “This is a normal drink, even better than some varieties of vodka, which costs 300 rubles (about 6 euros). Believe me, I tried all the possible options.” In Russian press, the strategy under consideration was used in that episode of the narrative where the viewpoint on the situation with “Boyaryshnik” poisoning, pronounced by the Ambassador of Ukraine to Finland is condemned: The Ambassador of Ukraine in Finland Andrey Olefirov explained on his Twitter page the meaning of “funny pictures” about tincture “Boyaryshnik” published by him earlier. According to the diplomat, he placed the images “not against people, but with the authorities”. “This is not directed against people, but (against) the authorities that cannot save people at home,” he said.

This is a principle that only in some cases allows extracting more information from the statements than they actually contain. It can also be presented from the point of view of the speaker and the addressee:

Speaking person: Do not speak more than required.

Recipient: Extract from the statement as much information as you can, which you can extract yourself, based on your own knowledge of the world.

S. Levinson formulates the following hierarchy of principles: Q-principle > I-principle, which determines the speech behavior of communicating subjects. According to Q (Quantity) principle, it should provide the most complete information, but it must also take into account I (Informational value) principle limiting the provision of information that the recipient is able to extract from verbal proposition, based on their background knowledge.

The peculiarities of the implementation of the I (Informational value) principle in the narrative “Poisoning by surrogate alcohol in Siberia” are manifested primarily through the quantitative ratio of newspaper publications in the press of Russia and Germany: German newspapers (Süddeutsche Zeitung - 5 texts; Zeit - 1 text; "Frankfurter Rundschau" - 2 text); Russian media (Izvestia - 134 texts; Trud - 26 texts; Novaya Gazeta 44 texts). Thus, there is a clear predominance of the resonance of the depicted event in the Russian newspapers, which is determined just by the informative relevance of the event in question to a greater extent for Russian society than for German. German journalists do not report more facts and comments than their readers require, including on the basis of their background knowledge.

The implementation of the I (Informational value) principle in the analyzed narrative is also determined by clip thinking in the course of newspaper communication, especially in its online version. Signs of clip thinking on Ruzhentseva:

- “the ability to perceive a large or very large information flow;
- the preference for simplified information;
- the replacement of linear thinking nonlinear;
- the out-of-contextual perception of a piece of information”(Ruzhentseva, 2017).

In newspaper internet narrative, clip character is intensified through a large number of alternative sources of information that are simultaneously available online; non-linearity of information, manifested in the form of hyperlinks; out-of-contextual reception of news in the press due to the possibility of stopping to get acquainted with the news on any frame from the narrative continuum. At the language level, reductionism is particularly pronounced, i.e. simplification of the depicted events for manipulating the electorate. Modern studies point out that political leaders and journalists “in many cases are forced to express themselves in the most generalized form, use words and phrases that various addressees understand in their own way” (Chudinov, 2012). A coarse, unaccented problem is often associated with explication of ideological preferences. Thus, in particular, in the following article from the German newspaper “Zeit”, prejudice about general drunkenness in Russia is explicated by common phrases, which is aggravated by heightened attention to alcoholic surrogates because of the cheapness of the last: *Seit einer Preiserhöhung können sich viele Russen Spirituosen nicht mehr leisten. Stattdessen trinken sie einen Badesatz vom Schwarzmarkt, der tödlich wirken kann - After the price increase, many Russians cannot afford alcohol. Instead, they use bath concentrate from the black market, which can be deadly.* Thus, in the text passage cited above, although full information about the event is given (which implements Q (Quantity) principle),

I (Informational value) principle is also explicable, which limits the provision of information for the recipient by the ideological framework of the subject of narrative communicative action.

The following example from the German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* presents a more realistic picture of Russian reality, which indicates a greater ideological neutrality of the narrative in the dyad of “the author of the text (narrator) is a reader”. Here the narrator seems relevant to clarify that only certain layers of Russians tend to consume alcoholic substitutes: *Schwer abhängige Trinker greifen zu Parfüm oder alkoholhaltigen Reinigungsmitteln, weil sie billiger sind als Wodka (Süddeutsche Zeitung 12/19/2016)*. - *Finished alcoholics will use cologne or alcohol containing detergents, since they are cheaper than vodka.*

The Russian press mentions the words of President V. Putin, who regards a comparable level of alcohol consumption in Russia and in Northern Europe, which can be interpreted as a realization of the I (Informational value) principle, since this is relevant when showing the fact that things in Russia are not so bad: *Commenting on the general trend of using household liquids as alcohol, the president noted that the level of alcoholism in Russia is no less than in Northern Europe.*

The famous linguist V. Karasik believes that “in the postmodern era, the carnivalization of being becomes the most important characteristic of our life, the line between reality and fiction is erased. “We live in a world of factoids (Karasik, 2017). A factoid is a simulation of the fact. Factoids as linguistic and cultural phenomena Karasik identifies with rumors (information with a dubious degree of authenticity) or fakes, “deliberately false information (from the English - fake), fake news, which used to be called “newspaper ducks”, sometimes called “throwing”; unlike disinformation intended for specific recipients, the fake is addressed to the general public”(Karasik, 2017).

In the analyzed narrative “Surrogate alcohol poisoning in Siberia”, the rumors are presented in the German version by means of an evidential design in boldfaced with the verb “sollen”. At the same time, the author of the text expresses uncertainty about the accuracy of the message, communicating simultaneously with both the reader (informing him of the information and implementing the (Quantity) principle) and the source of information that is simultaneously a character of the narrative communicative action (assessing the authenticity of the reported proposition and thereby uses (Informational value) - principle, dosing epistemological responsibility):

*Russische Behörden nahmen am Mittwoch elf Verdächtige fest, die das Mittel **produziert und verkauft haben sollen**. “On Wednesday, Russian law enforcement authorities detained eleven suspects who, according to their data, were producing and selling an alcohol surrogate. A similarly structured speech event occurs during the fake news: “76: 0 in favor of methanol” The “Boyaryshnik” case develops in a given format. On Wednesday, the information channels reported: “The chief of the Irkutsk region police is accused of negligence in the case of poisoning with “Boyaryshnik”; “The head of the Irkutsk police is suspected of negligence”; “A high-ranking police officer was arrested”; “The chief of the Irkutsk police is detained” etc. Of course, this is fake. In reality, a typical switchman was detained - the head of the precinct police department and only in one of the eleven city police departments. Denis Cheremisin, 33, graduated in 2005 from a local technical university, a former district police officer.*

In the example presented above, fake decoding takes place, which is represented in the opposition newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*. In this fake, from the position of the narrator, the information is given in quotes (this explicits the communication of the narrator and the character), but, nevertheless, it is addressed to the

reader, who is received through the prism of the author's selection on the subject of its correlation with real reality (this speech action, based on the above, it can be qualified as an interaction in the dyads of "the author of the text (narrator) - the character being described" and "the character being described is the reader").

**M (Manner) principle:** What is depicted according to an unconventional pattern describes an atypical state of affairs (Levinson, 2000). M (Manner) principle describes speech behavior of the speaker and the recipient:

Speaking person: Do not use a tagged expression for no reason.

Addressee: What is said in a marked manner is not unmarked.

If we consider this principle from the standpoint of synergetics, then the tagged expression can be identified with "points of attractiveness", which are understood as "attracting attention, interest fragments of verbal, visual and acoustic series ("tidbits"), "breaking linear text" and working on discrete type of modern perception of information" (Ruzhentseva, 2017). First of all, they should include headings and headings complexes. So, for example, the heading "Mehr als 70 Tote durch alkoholhaltigen Badezusatz" (More than 70 people died after drinking alcohol-containing bath lotion) was built using expressive inversion, which implies, in addition to factual information, its meaningful conceptual assessment by the narrator, i.e. regret for the high death toll from alcohol poisoning.

Anecdotes in the composition of newspaper narrative are also points of attraction, which explicate the set of principles described above, which is presented in the example below, where the old Soviet joke marks the naturalness of drunkenness as features of the national Russian mentality: *Auf der Straße wird Parfüm verkauft. Eine lange Warteschlange bildet sich. Als ein Mann 20 Flakons verlangt, gibt es Proteste. Aber ein anderer Kunde ruft: "Lasst ihn doch! Vielleicht will er ja eine Hochzeit feiern."* Den Witz erzählten sich die Russen schon während der Perestroika unter Michail Gorbatschow. - "They sell perfume on the street." The consumers form a huge queue. When one man asked for 20 bottles of perfume, the queue began to protest. But one of the buyers exclaimed: "Leave him alone! Perhaps he will have a wedding". Russians told this anecdote already during perestroika under Mikhail Gorbachev.

Intertextual inclusions as points of attractiveness are also quite common in the analyzed material, where a modified quotation from Hamlet implements the above-mentioned conversion principles: *Question - to drink or not to drink? - for a certain and quite impressive mass of fellow citizens cannot stand in principle, they will drink, but since they are constrained in means, they will look for what is more accessible.*

In some cases, the M (Manner) principle is expressed in the form of subtext, where the implicit axiological modality is expressed, which despite the zero markedness in the surface structure of the text, is easily decoded by the reader. So, for example, there is an implication in the title of the article "The king is good, the "Boyaryshnik" is bad". Its axiological semantics can be interpreted on the basis of the reconstruction of literal meaning, based on the consonance of the name of the tincture, which poisoned people in Irkutsk, and the precedent saying "The king is good, the "Boyaryshnik" is bad" in bold type. Traditionally in Russia it was believed that the tsar was simply not informed about the lawlessness on the ground, since He was busy solving more important global problems. Therefore, the entire responsibility for the lawlessness on the ground was shifted to the bad boyars. Oppositional Novaya Gazeta, in line with this precedent statement, interprets what happened in Irkutsk: *the Government has shown quite an adequate*

response to 75 single-step corpses. People were poisoned by a fake perfume concentrate, and excise taxes will rise to champagne. *Mumu* was written by Turgenev, and the monument - to Pushkin. With regard to the conversation principles and the communicative dyads associated with their implementation, in the example cited above, we did not note any fundamental differences compared to the cases mentioned above of other points of attraction.

## 7. Conclusion

Drawing the conclusion of the interpretation of communicative actions in the newspaper narrative from the standpoint of neogrice theories, the author notes the relevance of the Q-principle, I-principle and M-principle as its transcendental basis, which is based on interaction and self-organization in communicative dyads of “author of the text (narrator) – reader”, “the author of the text (narrator) is the described character” and “the described character is a reader”.

The prospects for further study of the newspaper narrative from a neogrice position are related to:

- the interpretation of press materials in the publications of Russian and foreign journalists, taking into account the national, age, gender and other characteristics of narrators;

- the study of the communicative features of the description of events in different materials of the print media (news, editorials, reports from the scene of the events being described, etc.);

- the analysis of the specifics of the reception of publications in high-quality and mass newspapers.

Thus, such studies provide an opportunity to characterize the ideological impact of the press from the point of view of different national linguocultural societies.

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