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Post mass media in the modern informational society
"Journalistic text in a new technological environment:
achievements and problems"

INNOVATIVE MEDIA PROJECTS: NEW FORMS OF
INFORMATIONAL PERCEPTION (SERIES "1968.DIGITAL")

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Abstract

The article considers the peculiarities of the innovative media project "1968Digital. The year when it all started", included in the short-list of the award "Made in Russia – 2018" as a source of extra intellectual, social and psychological load for the contemporary consumer of information. In conditions of media space transformation with individual mobile device being the main channel of communication, the contemporary net stories are analyzed as the symbolic circuit system. The first series for mobile phones became the answer to technological, communicative, psychological challenges of the 21st century. A special attention is paid to the development of the historic topic with the help of the latest multimedia and transmedia technologies, to the change of the dialogue principles between the addresser and the addressee within the situation of the reference to the past. Another important aspect is the study of specific functioning and perception of the polycode media text demanding special background knowledge and skills of informational consumption. The study of the audience of the project "1968Digital. The year when it all started" showed the following: Internet contacts are often formalized with the appearance of the minimal subject "autonomy" and maximal certain inclusiveness in the ready media project; the authors analyze the innovative media project from the point of view of transformation of perception of contemporary media texts and state the results of the social and psychological survey of the audience.

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1. Introduction

Digital technologies and new formats of communication with both interpersonal and mass peculiarities provided the opportunity to create new types of journalistic text. Some successful media managers (Galina Timchenko, Demian Kudryavtsev) explain the expansion of journalism in social media with the fact that editors have to follow the audience.

The screens of modern gadgets attract consumers into another world which is different from reality where the number of undefined is great and sometimes it seems that common human values are left in the past. This new type of existence in virtual space changed everything: principles of relation/communication with the surrounding world and people, ways of perception of information, understanding the past, the present and the future. Our life is one big window into the virtual world, but the size of the window depends upon the diagonal of the mobile screen we cannot think our whole life without. A man starts thinking how to preserve individuality, values, humanity in the new digital reality (Grishanina, 2017). New technologies are produced to change the world, to make our life better, more comfortable, more informative. Some psychologists (Kurpatov, 2006; Gurieva, Tararukhina, Chiker, & Yanicheva, 2017) claim that the depth of human relations is also important in new technologies as well as in traditional, conservative kinds of communication.

This problem is getting acute in the situation of society's segmentation, predicted by Toffler (1980) when certain social groups, large or small, mediate their own ideals, values, principles and exist not only in real, but in virtual space as well. So, the talks about possible creation of a virtual state are not accidental (Pavel Durov, creator of VKontakte and Telegram, is certain that in the future IT-giants may claim their total independence by creating their autonomous states).

The question of communication as a social dialogue and the role of a journalist in its formation is acute nowadays. The "digital break" is an important tendency and specific feature of contemporary life, and it defined the new professional tasks of a journalist: to find channels, language and methods of communication able to unite representatives of different social groups on the level of understanding the individual and group values. Mostly, the answer to this question is the transmedia project "1968Digital. The year it all started" (<https://1968.digital/ru/>).

The authors of the project "1968Digital. The year it all started" M. Zygar, K. Shainyan, T. Bekmambetov (as cited in Simakova, 2018) followed the audience and created the series for mobile phones considering it as a universal device for communication. The uniqueness of the platform demanded new ways of creation of both media text and media image – the project shows 1968 as "the most important year of the 20th century". Zygar believes that it was in 1968 when people felt different (as cited in Simakova, 2018). Its events gave birth to the system of values which exists now. Not only contemporary understanding of human rights, sex relations and attitude to black people, but the way we know the art, fashion, music – it all started in 1968. Even Internet, in fact, was created in 1968.

The study of viewer's perception of new digital projects is conducted for the first time and it is a unique experiment of following the audience reaction on innovative ways of informational representation.

Nowadays this subject has not been studied thoroughly. There is a number of Russian and Western researches which describe the approaches to the study of transformations in the processes of perception of

digital media content compared to the perception of the traditional text (Vyugina, 2017; Zubkov, 2010, 2014; Poluekhova, 2014; Sibiryakova, 2016).

Most of them agree that a contemporary user has no distinct understanding of what is mass media: The high level of technological literacy, common for the digital generation, allows not only using all the range of Internet and its key services abilities, considering it as the main source of information and the platform for interaction, but also creating trends of media consumption and formulating new basic informational needs (Vyugina, 2017). Scientists define the new era as “post-digital” (Cramer, 2015; Contreras-Koterbay & Mirocha, 2016), and Denikin (2017) characterizes the peculiarities of post-digital culture functioning: “Post-digital art does not aesthetize the images, but creates the spaces of “added reality” (hybrids of digital simulation and physical world), which involve the user, the viewer and the computerized artifacts (devices, gadgets, nets etc.), interacting and influencing each other. They form the zone “inter” aesthetized by artists which connects post-digital art and contemporary participative culture”.

Though there is no detailed consideration of the factors that form the field of media perception in mobile phones.

2. Problem Statement

The traditional and innovative methods of work are used to create the media image of the significant historic epoch in the project “1968Digital. The year when it all started”. The traditionalism is mostly connected with the search of information: quite a number of various sources has been studied and referenced to, a large amount of actual material has been thoroughly selected and systematized. The sources may be divided into three groups: official – documents, news photos and films, memoirs; publications in mass media – newspapers, journals, TV and radio broadcasts; works of art – literature, music, theatre, cinema, posters etc. A large amount of actual material collected from these sources is systematized and structured with two principles: selection of materials for a thematic series and the material “wandering” through various issues. A special attention is paid to the fact that space and time margins are much broader than 1968, but historic events of different years – from the middle of the previous century until 2019 – are selected and presented in such a way that they participate in creation of the media image of one year, “when it all started”.

Innovative tools and methods are mastered on the level of fact and choice of means of its interpretation, comment, evaluation: historical reality is immersed into the mobile background that is common for contemporary man. It is not easy to percept a large amount of information represented in different ways and with different sign systems, because it demands not only skills of mastering a mobile device but a certain set of background knowledge, mostly historic.

Shainyan (as cited in Simakova, 2018) underlines that it’s not a commercial, but educational project. This exactly supports the acute goal: the tasks of creation of the historic epoch and formation of historic thinking are solved in a certain sense with the principle of anachronism, when historic reality is added with freshly digested realities. The construction of a complex, constantly changing on mobile screen, virtual space with the help of news photos and films, mass media publications, memories, quotations from official documents and fiction literature, on the one hand, and likes, emoticons, gif-animations, mems, interactive maps, mobile applications, on the other hand, is demanded to build the

whole historic image: “Transmedia narrative is constructed in such a way that historical elements, connected with each other, are spread in a certain way through various media channels with the purpose to create the whole and programmed experience of history” (Lapina-Kratasyuk, 2015, para. 17).

The most important characteristics of the project are convergence and play (including the precedent texts), both of which are drawn to globalization on all the levels of the multimedia text: the actual material covers different countries and different epochs; polycode allows using different means – verbal, audial, visual, multimedia; multiple plot lines and personal stories complicate the structure of both one series and the project on the whole. The story-telling, well-developed by contemporary journalists, obtains a new quality. Trans media is traditionally defined as “one big subject, many stories, many forms, many channels” (Moloney, 2014, para. 15), characterizing media story-telling, Samoilenko (2016) underlines that it “attracts the reader into a story without repetition of its content” (p. 53).

Along with this a special study is demanded by the problem of perception: accustomed to scroll, i.e. to quickly look through a set of facts, to briefly cover the news list without thorough reading, which is the technology offered by the sensor mobile screen and applied by contemporary user, consumer is demanded a lot of attention, as simultaneously he can read (chats, comments, quotations etc.), watch (video, photos, emoticons, number of likes/dislikes, views etc), listen (background journalistic text, music, mobile signals, telephone talk etc.) in the process of mobile consumption of information. The degree of his immersion into the play influences the accuracy of his perception of the author’s text on cognitive and emotional levels, the efficiency of the dialogue.

3. Research Questions

How do new conditions and technologies of communication transform the professional work of a journalist and the result of his creative activity – media text? There is a problem of what is more important: creative beginning, author’s position or technologies (Virovtseva, 2015). How are the principles of organization of the dialogue “author – recipient”, “editor-audience”, “addresser – addressee” changed within the conditions of multimedia, hypertext and interaction?

What new skills of informational consumption must an addressee/recipient obtain so that communication does not just take place but becomes effective and entertaining? Is the dialogue between representatives of different social groups possible within the conditions of “digital break”?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to define the specific of functioning of new types of the journalistic text in multimedia and transmedia formats on the level of principles of informational organization and methods of media image creation as well as on the level of its perception.

Hypothesis: media project forms, mentioned here, can form the new principles of perception, interpretation of bearers and types of information in consumer/reader’s consciousness. In turn, they influence the appearance of innovative media projects with journalism being their leading activity.

5. Research Methods

The problems and the subject of the research determine the choice of methodological foundation for work. The empiric data are analyzed in the research on the basis of principles of objectiveness and consistency, unity of logical and historical approaches.

Methods: functioning of the transmedia project is studied in the beginning of work on the basis of focus-groups, training monitoring; further on, the textual analyses, Internet-analyses of the project media texts (34 series); the final stage is the survey of 150 consumers/viewers of different age, mostly young, and evaluation of perception of multimedia text, ways of creation of media image of a certain event and historic epoch. The obligatory term of the research is that a recipient possesses a mobile phone.

6. Findings

The research showed the following: most recipients (90%) showed some interest to the project (“I like it”, “I’ll recommend it to my friends”, “I’ll send the link to my friends”, “I’ll follow the new series”). Among those who approved the new format there are 88% of young age (18-30).

The basic problem zones of perception were defined. Upon watching the series of the project “1968Digital”, the consumers mentioned that it was difficult for them to follow the constantly changing information on the screen, to percept, to remember and to evaluate it. The difficulty is determined by several reasons, the most important of which are:

1) Polycode, polysign presentation of information in the text: verbal and visual signs – sms, running line, photo caption, announcements, photos, background text, phone talks, film extracts, videos etc; sound signals – phone tones, melodies, songs, internoise; new types of signs – emoticons, likes/dislikes, statistics etc. All these allows speaking about the polydiscursive principle of communication, when “discourses, mixing with each other, constantly compete, which helps to actualize the text in different discursive vectors” (Panchenko, 2016, para. 7).

2) The speed of such polycode informational flow, its polyphony, when it is necessary to simultaneously involve different means of perception – watching, reading, listening. It is not accidental that researchers of multimedia communications speak about the change in the type of thinking (Zagidullina, 2015).

3) The lack of necessary background knowledge which would allow building a complex associative line suggested but the authors of the series. The beginning and the end of the most of the issues see a change of scenes with political leaders and/or public leaders of both the past and the present – Mao Zedong, Nikita Khrushchev, Ronald Reagan, Leonid Brezhnev, Michael Gorbachev, Angela Merkel, Dmitry Medvedev, Donald Trump, Alexander Solzhenitsin, John Lennon, Angela Davis and many others; scenes of historically important events – ceremony in honour of Yuri Gagarin, anti-military demonstrations of hippies, the White House defense etc. All these participates in the formation of media image of 1968, according to the concept to the creators of the series, but many scenes are not known to the young viewers, so there are no necessary associations, no co-creativity. But the precedence turns out to be the most important element of contemporary strategic communications.

Those recipients who marked the convenience of the broadcasting format (80% of interviewed) claimed the following (starting with the most preferable):

1) The format is convenient because it does not destroy the common perception of information in gadgets (“modified for contemporary users of traditional applications” – 100% of those who approved the choice).

2) Due to the form of broadcasting the material “attracts, produces a desire to watch through the end and follow the new series”.

3) Some universalism of the project (“there is no certain gender or age, and this is good, everyone would like it”).

4) Direct address to the contemporary audience in narration about historic events (“story about that year in the language which is comprehensive and interesting today”).

5) The form of broadcasting is viewed by recipients as the form of self-expression (reflection, reason for discussion in the net space).

7. Conclusion

The research showed interest to the study of new formats of informational broadcasting in media space. Such researches demand complex work considering social, psychological, economic, political and ethnic cultural factors.

The informational epoch gives birth to the informational background, and this fact becomes the subject of study of the audience by psychologists, sociologists. The research states some marks which need further attention, among them, in particular, there is the analyses of the value system of recipients, deep study of the content and demands of the future audience, connection with the authors. The components of psychology of social consolidation on the basis of accentuation of consumer’s worldview are claimed as the communicative strategy of the nearest future.

Philosophical question of digital innovations demands some serious study: imitation means, simulacrum. Leaning upon the study of new formats of communication and informational broadcasting, social psychologists produce the following term – social autisation.

The research showed the directions of further social and psychological study of the audience: on the one hand, simplification of our life, on the other hand – a lesser need to train communicative skills.

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