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**DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCIES
THROUGH INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES (BASED ON THE
TRAVELOGUE GENRE)**

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Abstract

The article covers the peculiarities of training in communicative competencies through such technologies as virtual and augmented reality. The travelogue genre is cited as an example.

It offers a description of the research that focuses on the evolutionary dynamics of the travelogue genre both in international and national genre studies.

Russian research literature has a tendency to substitute the term "travelogue" for terms such as "travel notes", "travel journal", "wanderings" and "globetrotting".

Furthermore, the travelogue is considered as an advertising genre in the tourism industry which constitutes a polycode text combining both visual and verbal components and performs a marketing, communicative, axiological and aesthetic function.

The goal of the research is to analyze the peculiarities of training in communicative competencies through the technologies of virtual and augmented reality. The travelogue genre serves as an example. The subject is part of the curriculum for bachelor students majoring in "Public Relations" and "Tourism".

Digital and VR & AR technologies lead to the transformation of the customary communicative pattern, and the role of non-verbal components is increased. The focus shifts to visual thinking and sensory perception of information while the role of the verbal component is reduced.

Of important theoretical significance is the research into the interaction between verbal and non-verbal components in the advertising text. The combination and skillful use of heterogeneous codes contribute to the achievement of the chief goal and ensure coherence and integrity of the text in the context of integrated communication.

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1. Introduction

In the face of the contemporary information age, complex socioeconomic conditions and shortage of jobs, the knowledge and skills of college graduates are expected to meet the rapidly changing requirements of the labour market. This is the reason for the search for a new educational strategy, as is evidenced by the change in Federal Educational Standards, the development of effective teaching methods and changes in the content of various academic disciplines.

The fact that many theoretical problems in the field of advertising and public relations are still unresolved is related to a relatively new reality that emerged in post-Soviet Russia.

Training of advertising majors began in the early 1990s. The first textbooks and “how to” manuals were translations from their overseas counterparts (Aaker, 2012; Habibullina, 2016; Ogilvy, 1985; Ogilvy, 2012).

The approaches and solutions to communicative problems reflected Western realities and were often unfit for the Russian environment.

The first and only attempt so far to analyze PR genres from a theoretical standpoint was undertaken by Alexei Krivonosov (Krivonosov, 2001). Numerous other publications constitute either “how-to” manuals for the creation of advertising and PR texts or textbooks in stylistics and editing.

The new Federal Educational Standard in the area of "Advertising and Public Relations"(42.03.01) took effect on December 30, 2017.

The document defines general educational competencies. According to Standard #3, the graduate must be "capable of using modern technology applications and information and communication technologies in professional activities" (Federal'nyj standart, 2017).

The professional standards also formulate job descriptions and required skills i.e. they read as follows: “Taking advantage of modern information and communication technologies, including internet technologies, and specialized software applications”. Digital technologies and virtual and augmented reality technologies (VR & AR) lead to transformation of the customary communicative model laid out in the textbooks on communication theory.

2. Problem Statement

The emergence of a new integrated type of communication at the junction of real, virtual and augmented realities calls for both theoretical comprehension and the development of practical capabilities to utilize VR & AR technologies for advertising purposes. This applies particularly in the travelogue genre when promoting services in the tourism industry.

Many theoretical issues are being debated in contemporary PR and advertising studies. In particular, this includes the genres of advertising and PR texts (Black, 1993; Kozlov, 2015; Krivonosov, 2001; Ozola, 2014; Smith, 2012).

This research is dedicated to the analysis of the genre characteristics of the travelogue, its evolution in Russian genre studies from the travel journal of the 18th century to the entertaining travel stories of 21st century chat rooms and blogs and a special genre of advertising discourse, as well as the description of the travelogue as an advertising polycode text in the field of tourism.

3. Research Questions

The purpose of the research is to analyze the peculiarities of the formation of communicative competencies using virtual and augmented reality technologies, with the travelogue genre cited as an example in the training of bachelor students majoring in "Advertising and PR" and "Tourism".

4. Purpose of the Study

To achieve this goal it is necessary to propose ways to solve the theoretical problems of differentiating the "travel journal" and "travelogue" genres, to formulate the main parameters of the travelogue genre in the advertising discourse pertaining to the tourism industry.

With that in mind, it is necessary, first, to clarify the definition of the term "travelogue". Second, to identify the peculiarities of the "travelogue" genre and its distinctive features, comparing it with other genres dedicated to travel. Third, to analyze the advertising features of the travelogue genre as a polycode text which includes elements of various emblematic systems (verbal text, story boards, occasional music accompaniment in the form of ethnic melodies, sounds of nature, etc.) as well as the opportunity to utilize VR & AR technologies.

5. Research Methods

Publications by national and international researchers in the field of genre studies and integrated communications served as the methodological framework for the research (Diskurs traveloga, 2008; Miljugina, 2013; Polonskij, 2015; Bax, 2011; Newsom, 2010; Williamson, 2010; Young, 2015; Masovic, 2015).

Together with interdisciplinary methods (comparison, generalization, observation, commenting etc.) purely linguistic research methods were also employed including lexical-semantic, lexicographical and contextual analysis. The case-study method was employed to give a didactic description of the potential of the travelogue genre in tourism advertising.

6. Findings

6.1. Travelogue: terms and genres

The English language dictionaries give a consistent definition of the "travelogue" lexeme. For example, the electronic version of Merriam Webster gives three definitions of the word "travelogue" 1. a piece of writing about travel; 2. a talk or lecture on travel, usually accompanied by a film or slides; 3. a narrated motion picture about travel [URL: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/travelogue>].

The Oxford dictionary gives the following definition: «A film, book, or illustrated lecture about the places visited by or experiences of a traveler» [URL: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/travelogue>].

Burton Holmes, an American traveler, is considered to be the creator of the structural cognitive complex phenomenon called the "travelogue". He introduced this term back in 1904 to make the general public aware of his travels. He delivered lectures at American universities, illustrated with numerous photographs and documentary films (The Burton Holmes Archive).

In the contemporary English-speaking world, the word "travelogue" is used in its original meaning only, the one Holms started using i.e. a story about travels accompanied by photographs and video footage. In all other cases they use traditional genre terminology, as evidenced by Katarina Gephardt's «The idea of Europe in British travel narratives, 1789-1914» in which the term "travel writing" is consistently used in line with the 19-20th century traditions. (Gephardt, 2014). The term "travelogue" occurs rarely, only in the description of books which are augmented with photographs, drawings, maps and other illustrations (Gephardt, 2014; Muhic, 2015; Ozola, 2014; Zold, 2014).

Not only in the US and Great Britain, but also in the countries of South-East Asia the term "travelogue" is established in the tourism sphere as a story about travels with personal impressions and assessments (Smrutisikta Mishra, 2014). For example, for more than ten years the Chinese national TV network has been carrying a popular English language show called "Travelogue". The goal of the show is to promote tourism to China, its national parks, invitations to travel, and to trigger excitement through personal emotion-filled first-hand accounts. [URL: <http://cctv.cntv.cn/lm/travelogue/index.shtml>].

Currently, the TV show is expanding its presence in social networks in order to take a leading position in the global tourism information space. Worthy of note are other popular world websites, for example, <https://www.wanderlust.co.uk/trip-finder>.

The English language internet also features websites which offer to teach the skills of travelogue writing. Their recommendations are reminiscent of a teacher's advice on how to write essays on the subject "How I spent my summer break". These websites clearly feature three genres: travel writing, the guidebook and the travelogue, which in the Russian language correspond to such definitions as "travel notes", "guidebook" and "travelogue" [URL: <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/comparing-travel-writing-examples-6126473>].

6.2. Travelogue genre in Russian genre studies

In the Russian language, the term "travelogue" in its contemporary genre meaning occurs for the first time in the book "Russia and America in travelogues and intertexts" by Alexander Etkind published in 2001 (Jetkind, 2001). From this point on this term is used to refer to travel stories instead of long-established traditional genres such as "travel diary", "travel journal", "traveler's notes", "pilgrim's diary", "travel notes", "diplomats' travel notes", "pilgrimage", "wanderings of the soul" etc. (Anisimov, 2014; Bodrova, 2015; Majga, 2016; Mamurkina, 2013; Rusakov, 2015; Russkij travelog, 2015).

The encyclopedia "Discourse Studies" offers a definition of the "travelogue" term from the perspective of cognitive science i.e. "A narrative about the real or imaginary journey, a form of subjective and creative exploration of reality". Further, V. Rusakov, the author of the article, writes: "The types and genres of the travelogue are very diverse, they cover both oral tradition (stories about travels and feats of mythological heroes) and literature (scientific literature such as expedition reports, dictionaries and directories, "how to" manuals and etc., and fiction i.e. so-called "literature of adventure" and works on the wanderings of the soul in search of values and the meaning of life" (Rusakov, 2015).

A.E. Kozlov in effect regards "travel essays", "travel notes" and "letters" from areas visited by the traveler as variations of the travelogue when considering texts dating back to the middle of the 19th century (Kozlov, 2015).

A number of researchers justify the free treatment of the term "travelogue" by referencing the idea of M.V. Stroganova and E.G. Milyutina that "the notion of the travelogue entered the language of Russian linguistics only recently and has not yet solidified within the framework of strict definitions" (Miljugina, 2013).

It is noteworthy that researchers are not always agreed about the precise meaning of this term which migrated to Russian from the English language. Some define "travelogue" as "a journey" or "a narrative about a journey" which, is augmented on a regular basis with illustrations or maps (Bax, 2011). Others impart a more complex meaning to the term, seeing it as a "travel report" which maintains the chronology of the journey as well as including the description of personal emotional experience (Anisimov, 2014; Ozola, 2014; Smrutisikta Mishra, 2014; Zold, 2014).

6.3. Travelogue as a genre of advertising discourse

The travelogue as an advertising genre in the tourism sphere constitutes a polycode text, combining visual (photographs and video clips) and verbal components, which carries a fascinating message about travel and performs a marketing, communicative, axiological and aesthetic functions.

The marketing function of the travelogue is about persuading the potential buyer, first of all, to commit to going on a tour. Second, to select the marketed destination, i.e. to shape the consumer demand for the offered itinerary or destination.

The communicative function of the travelogue is about conveying information and, at the same time, persuading and encouraging potential consumers of the tourism product. To achieve this, strategies of persuasion and counsel are employed.

The axiological function of the travelogue focuses on evaluating the phenomena of the world around us from the point of view of moral, ethical and social values. It contributes to shaping a world view based on the principle of unity in diversity of humans of various races, nationalities, beliefs, cultures, etc.

The aesthetic function contributes to the development of a sense of beauty and the refining of good taste with the help of photo and video illustrations featuring architectural landmarks, folk crafts, the beauty of nature, etc.

A peculiarity of the travelogue is that the text must contain personal emotional experience. Important is the effect of presence, that the author is the eye-witness of what is happening, which builds credibility with readers. The reader of such a text, despite the distant mediated form of communication, believes or is prepared to believe the individual who personally visited the destination in question and who willingly shares his or her personal experience - explaining, step-by-step, where to buy tickets for local public transportation, how to make your way to a specific landmark, which souvenirs to bring back and what they cost, the highlights of the local cuisine, etc. All this is augmented with photo illustrations by the text's author or video footage on the internet. In this case, the travelogue as an advertising genre employs four levels of how to have an impact on the audience: cognitive, affective, suggestive and conative. According to G.

Tikhonova and Y. Giniatova "the essence of cognitive impact is about conveying a certain amount of information, an accumulation of data about the product" (Tihonova, 2014). "The purpose of affective action in the advertising message is to convert the information into a system of attitudes, motives, and principles for the target audience" (Tihonova, 2014). The conative impact is materialized by "pushing" someone into committing to a certain action.

6.4. The travelogue and new technologies

The emergence and development of new information technologies in the 21st century transformed not only the information and communicative medium but also the traditional model of a communicative situation. This entails the necessity to shape students' new communicative competencies through innovative technologies. "The digital world transforms the way people communicate, exchange information, and as a result the techniques of advertising" (Kuz'menkova, 2014).

The use of VR&AR technologies changes the relationship between verbal and non-verbal components in the communicative model. The role of non-verbal components increases sharply, the focus shifts to the visual thought process and sensory perception of information while the significance of the verbal component decreases.

The communicative goal is reached through other methods: one does not need verbal strategies and tactics to persuade the target audience, the effect of presence generated by virtual and augmented reality technologies becomes a decisive factor.

Successful Russian experience of using augmented reality as a means of promotion in the tourism industry is described by L. Khabibulina (Habibullina, 2016). Data is available on the internet on how this technology is employed in video games and advertisements by IKEA, McDonald's, etc. (Kuz'menkova, 2014).

Methodical aspect

When teaching academic disciplines such as "PR and Advertising Technologies" and "Advertising and PR in Tourism", or for the master class "Design in Advertising and Public Relations" master-class, assignments were developed for students to create travelogue texts with the simultaneous use of VR & AR technologies when designing advertising and PR campaigns to promote tourism services. This was based on the "Followmeto" internet project [<https://followmeto.travel/ru/about>].

The "Followmeto" and "Instagram" websites feature the photographs of a young lady pulling the arm of a young man while showing him the most beautiful destinations on Earth. Students were given individualized home assignments to develop advertising to promote a tourist destination. To do this they used specific techniques to create a travelogue text based around photographs and utilizing augmented reality technology through special applications developed for smartphones, iPhone and iPad.

A second type of assignment involves designing tours around Russia that promote inbound travel to the country as well as building brands for specific regions, all achieved through the use of VR technologies. The tourists are expected to view a virtual excursion through VR glasses, during which the coats of arms of Russian cities and logos of tour companies and sponsors appear in view. In this example, real objects are

integrated with virtual reality. We also hear the presenter's narration, which the students are required to write, with music playing in the background.

The requirements for writing an advertising travelogue are as follows. First of all, the text must contain foreign domestic narrative. Second, the description must be based on personal (or quasi-personal) experience, impressions and emotions. People tend to believe those with first-hand experience. Third, it is necessary to give an insight into an everyday panorama of the country/city i.e. sightseeing attractions, traditions, customs, cuisine, clothes, souvenirs, holidays, unique flora and fauna, subjects involving interaction with local residents. Fourth, the most appealing text will be one which breaks stereotypes and changes established perceptions.

Fifth, the travelogue must contain biographical elements, the author's personal view, his or her emotions and experience, perceptions and judgments. You encounter an author who is also a friend, ready to offer a piece of advice or to share his or her personal impressions. That is what lies at the heart of the travelogue genre.

The composition of the text for an advertising travelogue can be seen as a form of quest, with necessary movement in space, encounters along the way, adventures, and an ultimate goal to be achieved.

Such design projects within the academic process helps students to build essential skills, build teamwork, develop creative potential and analyze the interaction between verbal and non-verbal components in order to ensure coherence and integrity of the polycoded advertising text.

The scholars note the kaleidoscopic, multi-faceted, polycoded, semiotic, convergent and heterogeneous nature of contemporary advertising which constitutes a special type of a text which includes codes of different semiotic systems.

It is imperative not only to train the students to analyze, but also independently to create such texts in which the chief meaning is conveyed through verbal and non-verbal means. The relative contribution of these components may vary but they complement each other, thereby enhancing the impact.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, let us stress that the development of skills in innovative technologies is invaluable for bachelors and masters majoring in "PR and Advertising", given the current challenges of rapid globalization and an increasingly information-driven society.

Of important theoretical significance is the study of the interaction between verbal and non-verbal components in the advertising text, the combination and skillful use of heterogeneous codes to contribute to the achievement of the chief goal and to ensure the coherence and integrity of the text within the framework of integrated communications.

The advertising travelogue constitutes one of the chief methods of reaching out to a foreign audience and a foreign culture, and it can therefore serve as a useful mechanism when teaching Russian as a foreign language.

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