

TILTM 2022

Topical Issues of Linguistics and Teaching Methods in Business and Professional Communication

**DISCURSIVE PORTRAITURE OF URBAN YOUTH UNDER THE
CHALLENGES OF GLOBALIZATION**

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Abstract

This study discusses the issue of compiling a discursive portrait of young people based on the material of a social network such as “Vkontakte”. The mechanism of drawing up a discursive portrait of a certain social group in social networks is described. When discursive portraiture is implemented, it is significant to take into account three levels of analysis: micro-level, macro-level and mega-level of the discourse system. The semantic components of the mega-level and micro-level can be reconstructed through the pragmalinguistic, semiotic-synergetic and cognitive approaches to study of the semiosphere of young people’s self-presentation in a context of interaction with the dominant and recognizable linguocultural concepts, ideas, stereotypes about success and ways to achieve it. The study identified the dominant discursive attractors that transmit the social attitudes of young people, wide-spread key behaviour patterns of urban Russian youth. Through the social networks the dominant concepts, ideas, narratives, stereotypes are traced by studying posts about life goals and achievements that are considered as the criteria for success among young people.

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Keywords: Discursive portraiture, globalization, media discourse, youth

1. Introduction

The expressivity of the intensifying processes of intercommunication and globalization in the nascent global community exacerbates the demand of studying the phenomenon of self-identification of youth in the media space. This is rather complex process due to the comparison of one's personality with a complex of socio-economic and linguocultural markers. It includes the level of welfare, power, education, leisure activity and consumption. These indicators are inextricably linked with the ruling ideology in a society in general and in social groups in particular, the linguocultural value system of society, knowledge, generally accepted patterns of behavior for certain social groups, personal preferences.

One of the basic components of identity is its linguistic manifestation, conditioned by the needs of a young person to streamline ideas about himself and his/ her place in the global picture of the world, to find a dynamic balance with the world around him / her, which is achieved through integration into the linguistic and cultural space of society through user media content.

2. Problem Statement

Social media has generated a great amount of data: sharings, posts and discussions everyday. Due to this activity, social media platforms provide new opportunities for data mining and predictive analytics of human behavior, information diffusion, and influence propagation (Campana & Delmastro, 2017; Morstatter & Liu, 2017; Oliveira & Baldi, 2019; Zoonen, 2017).

Young people, as a representative of the new generation, are active consumers of the global digital environment. As a result of activity in the virtual space, young people leave a digital footprint. A digital footprint can be active or passive. When a user deliberately publishes his/ her personal data, talking about himself / herself on social networks and media, we can talk about an active digital footprint. If the data is collected without the consent of the owner, this should be called a passive digital footprint. In this research the active digital footprint were interpreted.

The collected data represent real systems, clustering, or community structure and are able to be used as instruments for social policy to be more prosperous (Norbutas & Corten, 2018; Zoonen, 2020).

The analysis within the context of contemporary society includes the effect of social media on a 'networking mindset' (D'Angelo & Ryan, 2019). The established communication with young people in the organization's campaigns is more effective if the message is sent by the representative of young generation (Dey et al., 2018).

The leaders or influential are responsible for the dissemination of information and the propagation of influence (Haddad et al., 2016; Haddad et al., 2018). So studying social influence in networks is crucial to understand how behaviour spreads.

A social network is considered as a global interactive multi-user on-line web medium filled by the content of network's participants. The networks are computerized social sites that allow different groups of users with shared interests or views to communicate (Krinsky & Crossley, 2014; Maqsood et al., 2017; Prell, 2006; Prinsen et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2020). The most active part in the sense of using social networks is youth, because social

networks are becoming powerful channels for the formation of dominant patterns of behavior in society and a given matrix of values and preferences.

Among the young web users in Russia, “Vkontakte” is one of the widespread social nets. This social network is a free application for mobile devices that allows users to mediatize the information about themselves and the events happening around, share photos and videos. Regular social networks are filled with posts and stories of a wide variety of topics. “Vkontakte” includes content only about yourself and not about others. Users’ media content usually includes photos and videos captured with a smartphone camera, with or without text, hashtags, emoticons, geotags, likes and views. Users can apply filters, masks, special effects to photographs and video materials, as well as distribute them through their service and a number of other social networks.

The structured social world gives a person many roles, which are assigned by his / her socio-economic and linguocultural touchstones. The world of social-networking is a kind of workshop for self-modeling of its digital personality. Due to the invisibility of the user, the lack of visual contact, the appearance of a person and his social status can be changed without making any efforts in real life, simply by modeling his / her media twin.

In social networks, young people suppose that it can bring them closer to their dreams by publishing what they consider important and valuable, by publishing what they wish other users to associate with their digital or real personality.

In the context of globalization and virtualization of many aspects in the life of a modern person, a huge variety of ways of self-presentation is realized - one of the critical components of socialization, reflecting the fields of both real and virtual communication.

The significance of the usage of social networks is intensifying and exerting influence upon the expansion of the means of self-presentation and virtual self-presentation. Thus, digital self-presentation of a social network’s user should be considered as a personal identity ratio.

Self-identification can be considered as a process of study of yourself within the frameworks of society. The individual self-identity of young people embodies a set of concepts of linguistic, cultural, social, economic, political systems. The growth of new web technologies has noticeably altered pace and speed, quality and ways of exchanging information with the outside world.

Through self-representation of young people, one can trace the dominant ideas in society at the mega-level of media discourse. The individual builds consciously his/ her linguistic behavior depending on the goals that he / she sets for himself / herself.

3. Research Questions

In accordance with a research topic the following question was stated:

What are the features of revealing mechanisms of discursive portraiture of urban youth in the face of challenges of globalization in urban Russia?

4. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to analyze users' web content in a social network "Vkontakte" among young people in the Russian city, Chelyabinsk, and create a discursive portraiture to identify the system of dominant and universally recognizable concepts, ideas, narratives, stereotypes, non-verbal means with identifying potential.

5. Research Methods

To identify the features of mental-linguistic structures for constructing meanings a new vision within the framework of pragmatolinguistic, semiotic-synergetic and cognitive approaches are acquired. A comprehensive methodology for analyzing the results of using data processing methods at the verbal and non-verbal levels avails to reveal the mechanisms of discursive portraying.

A discursive portraiture is the creation of a speech portrait of an individual or a system group using discursive means, namely, speech (written and oral), along with a complex use of discourse elements (images, videos, emoticons, hashtags, special effects, filters, sounds, gestures, smells, facial expressions, etc.), generating the possibilities of a very complex interaction between them. Interference of semantic components in the space of discourse gives rise to a plurality of interpretations. This is due to the mentality, modes of thinking, forms of the object (an individual or a separate social group), as well as the behavior of the research subject.

For portraying discourse consideration of the presence of three levels of analysis: a micro-level, a macro-level and a mega-level is taken. The micro-level is represented by all the many semantic components such as lexical units, speech constructions, emoticons, hashtags, images, video, special effects, filters, sounds, gestures, smells, facial expressions, etc., and their interpretations.

In any system of discourse, there is a dominant idea or a system of concepts that contains a system of motives, ultimate goals, communicative roles, a number of strategies, tactics, a system of values, and dominant patterns of behavior in society. This is the mega-level. The plural mass of semantic components at the micro-level in the discourse system interacts with the mega level of discourse, giving rise to the macro level.

The macro-level reflects linguistic reality, how information about an individual / social group is presented in a discourse system, what characteristics, qualities, patterns of behavior are revealed through the peculiarities of the use of lexical units, speech constructions that make a linguistic person / a social group special, recognizable, distinguishable from others. There is a scheme below of discursive portraiture formation (Figure 01):

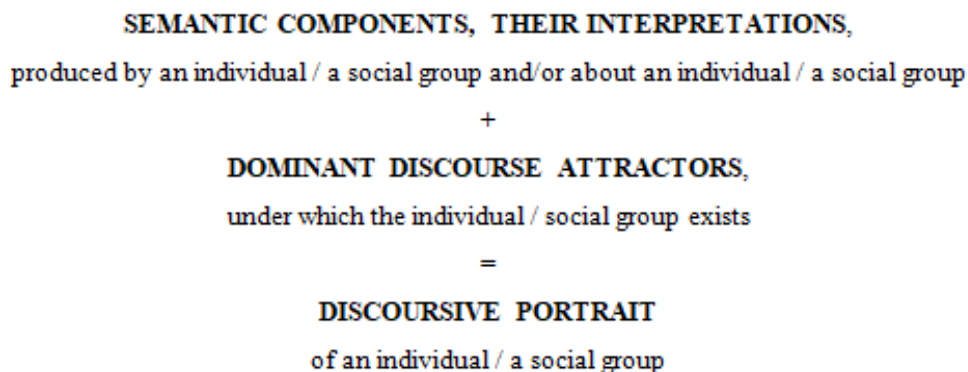


Figure 1. A scheme of discursive portraiture formation

At the mega-level of discourse, during linguo-cognitive interaction, the discourse is formed as a system of dominant and universally recognizable concepts, ideas, narratives, stereotypes, non-verbal means with identifying potential.

6. Findings

6.1. The characteristics of the research material

To compile a discursive portrait of young people based on the material of social networks such as “Vkontakte”, it appears necessary to define the dominant discursive attractors that transmit the social attitudes of young people, key behaviour patterns to achieve success in the sense of young people. The semantic components of the mega-level and micro-level can be reconstructed through the study of the semiosphere of youth self-representation within the context of its interaction with the dominant linguocultural concepts, ideas, notions about success and the ways of achieving it.

The semiosphere of youth self-representation in social networks (in this research, it is “Vkontakte”) includes both symbolic, sign-oriented expression and text-oriented one (Vkontakte, 2020-2021). Symbolic, sign-oriented expression can be represented by using emoticons, photographs, videos. The textual content allows us to assert the axiosphere of youth self-presentation as a part of the semiosphere.

The social media publications (about 2500 thousand ones) were selected by a territorial sampling using hashtags like #chel74, #74, #chelik, #chelyaba, which specializes in promotion of youth accounts in social networks and through the hashtags #Chelyabinsk #somewhere in Chelyabinsk and so on. The authors of the posts with these hashtags are young people living in Chelyabinsk who care for standing out among the others, attracting the audience, getting likes, comments, views and subscribers. Sampling of typical cases were also used in the research. Units of the general population were selected that had the typical value of the trait.

In the research three groups of publications should be highlighted according to the strategy of constructing an utterance in the social media posts (Figure 02).

First of all, it is worth noting the abundance of photos without any texts and notes, or any hashtags and emoticons. In our opinion, it indicates some degree of disorientation among young people in the world

around them. The posting of their photos and objects of the surrounding life illustrates the immaturity of the personality and the intention to try on different roles and masks, to get the reaction of the environment and strangers to their digital personality, the search for their landmarks in life.

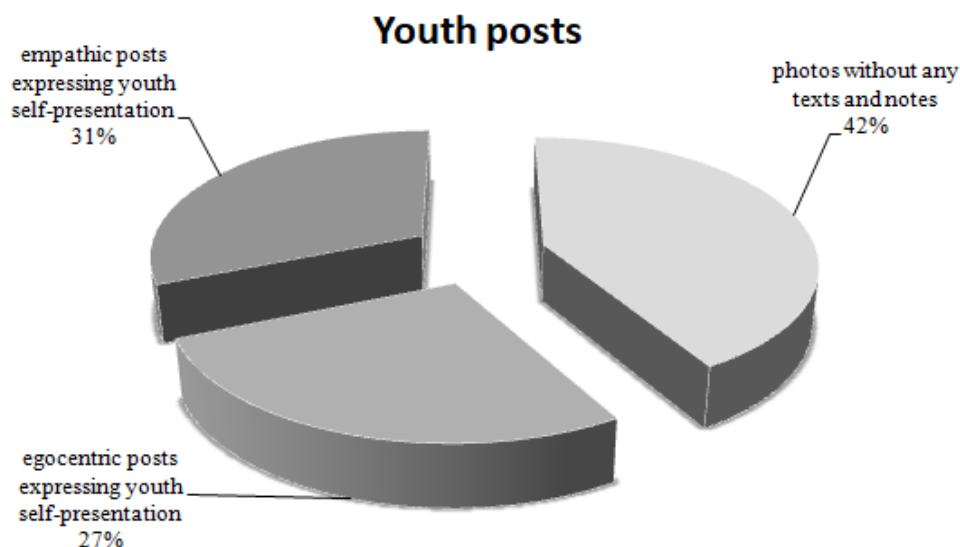


Figure 2. Percentage distribution of youth web posts in Chelyabinsk

6.2. Analysis of the egocentric posts expressing youth self-presentation

Among the multiple publications 2 different polarities in the self-presentation of young people in the social network are featured. The first group of posts expressing youth self-presentation is considered and can be named egocentric. Texts to the posts are terse, presented in the form of slogans and mottos. Often, postings contain emoticons that indicate the appealing to the emotive sphere of readers and subscribers.

The active participation of the audience is also very important. The readers and followers are able to support the ideas of the post's author with likes, comments views and shares. These slogans outline the secret philosophy of success in the life for young people.

A significant number of negative speech constructions should be noted. For example, «не будьте» (don't be like), «не будет» (will no longer be), «не думайте» (do not think), «не обсуждайте» (do not discuss), «не по системе» (not according to the system), «ни какой скромности» (no modesty), «вы никому ничего не обязаны» (you don't owe anyone anything).

The denial is used when a person cannot accept events or information and actually denies it. In our case, we are talking about the protest against the values of the older generation and the state. There are lexical units in the posts like «родители» (parents), «государство» (the state). At the micro level, this

phenomenon is also represented by lexical units such as «семья ,дети», «общество», «все» (family, children, society, everybody).

The values represented by parents and the state are connected by the younger generation with lexemes «рамки системы», «рутина», «ограничитель» (system framework, routine, limiter). This group of posts reveals instructions on how to achieve the goals, how to spend the time of the younger generation and guidelines to follow about life. For example, there are some verb constructions «выходите из рамок системы», «наплевать на общество», «мечтайте», «не думайте о плохом», «не обсуждайте», «уберите ограничитель в голове», «учитесь, развиваться, путешествовать становиться лучше» (get out of the system, don't give a damn about society, dream, don't think about bad things, don't discuss, remove the limiter in your head, learns, develop, travel, get better).

All these lexical units of the micro-level, under the impact of the mega-level of the semantic system of discourse, represented by the phrase "love for oneself" (любовь к себе), give rise to the macro-level. For this group the macro-level produces a fundamental reorganization of behavior patterns associated with the following lexical units as «удовольствие», «молодость», «выбирать только лучшее», «жить по кайфу» (pleasure, youth, choose only the best, live high).

6.3. Analysis of the empathic posts expressing youth self-presentation

There is another typical group of younger people posts in social networks. These posts are empathic and encouraging teambuilding. Though there are also a significant number of negative constructions in these publications. They are «ЧТОБЫ НЕ БЫЛО», «НЕ НАДО БРОСАТЬ», «не могли», «не описать», «не главное», «не судите» (WHAT IT WAS, DO NOT HAVE TO THROW, couldn't, not to describe, not the main thing, don't judge).

However, in this case, they do not fulfill the role of denying the older generation and the state, the established way of life and values. Here the negation is used to enhance the expressiveness of the author's statements.

In the second group, the lexemes «дружба», «друзья», «друг» (friendship, friends, a friend) stand for a mega-level of the investigated discursive space. In the case of group 1, the mega-level was represented by self-love and was designated by the lexemes I, mine, me, myself. In the case of group 2 the lexeme «we» (friends) appears in the texts of the posts.

The publications contain words of gratitude, support and mutual assistance («спасибо», «ждал и поддерживал»). Self-perception is realized through a team of like-minded people, associates of a common goal («Мы это сделали вместе» - We did it together).

When the mega and micro levels of discourse interact, a phrase «Не главное откуда ты, главное какой ты человек» (Not the main thing where you are from, the main thing is what kind of person you are) appears and illustrates the macro level of discourse. That is the another type of behavior pattern at macro level that are formed with the same lexical unites in the micro level of discourse system, but under the influence of completely different discourse attractors at the mega level.

So, in these cases the image of a dream symbolizes the goals that young people set for themselves.

6.4. Analysis of the posts about youth leisure activities

Self-presentation can be realized through posts about leisure and ways of spending free time. It can be a photo in the company of other people, selfies or photographs of landscapes and views of the surrounding area.

In the leisure sphere of a young person's life, one may follow the freedom of choice, which manifests itself in the form, place, time of leisure activity. In modern Russian society, there is an instability of normative value systems and the problem leisure activities of young people are becoming especially acute.

As per the publications, spending free time is associated with the following activities such as football, relaxing on the beach, riding scooters, walking in the park, listening to music, driving a car, resting at the seaside. Lexemes «задаем ритм» (set the rhythm), «Заорали на золотом пляже» (Yelling on a golden beach) represent the energy and strength of youth, albeit in a distracted and diffused form. Such posts are often accompanied by emoticons of sports, emotions, sound, music, flowers, clowns, zoo-emoticons. Besides some of the hashtags are in Latin. This fact illustrates the impact of the global value matrix on the linguistic consciousness of young people.

Leisure is often perceived as the main part of a young person's life. From satisfaction of free time activities depends on the general satisfaction with the life of the average representative of young people.

The entire set of semantic components of the discursive system (micro-level) is self-organizing under the power of the mega-level, which fixes in itself the system of values that exists in society. This cognitive interaction leads to the establishment of common patterns of young people's behavior (macro-level of the discursive system), recorded in the most popular posts, publications and posts in social networks as a guideline to follow.

6.5. Analysis of the posts about youth demand for justice

In the youth environment there is a stable demand for justice in some amounts of posts. In the group consciousness of youth it is possible to trace the installation according to which a just state should have a force and be attentive to the needs and requirements of society, provide equal distribution of public goods, social defence of the population. Justice is associated with order security, equality and strong power, which are represented in the lack of that kind of resources.

Lexemes «беспросвет» (hopeless), «россиядлягрустных» (Russia for the sad), «безуспешно» (unsuccessfully), «результаты несправедливости» (the results of injustice), «сложила лапки» (folded her paws), «ушла в себя» (withdrew into herself) represent a quiet disagreement with the current state of affairs or with current events, illustrate youngsters' helplessness.

The social disorientation of young people should be believed to be induced by the previously insufficiently worked out national ideology, which definitely contributes to the consolidation of society. Having clear and consistent propagated slogans of the axiological matrix of attitudes in society guarantees the implementation of social regulation and the integration of youth into society, as well as ideological function.

This phenomenon can also be traced by studying publications with life orientations and goals, the achievement of which are the criteria for success among young people.

7. Conclusion

Increasing role and influence of global mass communication promotes the popularization of the cult of external beauty among young women and the availability of a car or other attributes of success among young men. Unambiguously the mosaic matrix of global values simplifies the manipulating the linguistic consciousness of a young person who does not have developed and a personally accepted concept system.

The abundance of famous quotes of global mass culture in the publication to photo and video content (some of them in English) also indicates the absence or insufficiency of the system of axiological focuses

available in society that determine the behavioural patterns recorded in speech cliches, in concepts. To be more precise, they exist, but these are already new concepts, old values are partially replaced by new global guidelines and patterns of behaviour.

Discursive Portraiting as a procedure of discourse analysis allow to describe the mechanism of creating a system of dominant and universally recognizable lingua-cultural concepts, global patterns of behavior and guidelines to follow, stereotypes. It seems advantageous to use the procedure of discursive portraiture for other social groups too.

Youth is especially sensible to changes in any society. The investigation of this social group may forward to prognosticate the future alterations in a society. The research is demonstrated the partial integration of urban youth in Russia under the challenges of globalization. It is considered challenging to track this phenomenon in dynamics.

Acknowledgments

The research was funded by RFBR and Chelyabinsk Region, project number 20-412-740004.

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