III PMMIS 2019
Post mass media in the modern informational society
"Journalistic text in a new technological environment: achievements and problems"

SENSE-BUILDING AS A MENTAL TECHNOLOGY IN JOURNALISTIC TEXTS

Vera Antropova (a)*
*Corresponding author

(a) Department of Journalism and Mass communications, Chelyabinsk State University, ul. Bratyev Kashirinykh, 129, Chelyabinsk, Russia, ava45@yandex.ru,

Abstract

Due to the growing number of technologies in mass media activity we analyze such a mental strategy in journalistic work as sense-building. Sense-building is a purposeful process when the author of a journalistic text forms some socially meaningful concepts in readers' consciousness. Under concept we understand the mental education, expressed verbally and transmitting certain senses. Topicality and importance of senses are defined with the method of field structuring of a concept which has a core-periphery organization. The core of the structure is central, invariant sense components, possessing a semantic stability, and the periphery elements have a weaker, intermediate semantic connection with the center. Considering the polynuclearity of media culture, the author studied various mental technologies of sense-building by the example of usage of the concept «truth» in three types of printed mass media, divided onto the levels of the content quality (elite, quality and mass). The elite and mass publications modified the structure of the concept «truth» through the transformation of the near-core common-language elements into the core, though the concept in the elite discourse is realized through the affective contradictions, but in mass journalism the conflict is absent and mental stereotypes and samples are retranslated. In the discourse of quality publications the model coincided with the common-language one which tells about the importance of value-retranslating, reproducing function for this sector of printed mass media.

Keywords: Mental technology, sense-building, concept, journalistic discourse.

1. Introduction

In contemporary informational and communicative reality which possesses such important constants as pan-language character of thinking and, correspondingly, text-centered humanitarism, the ontological status belongs to the "sense" – inter-disciplinary unit, being in the competence of philosophy, cultural studies, theory of communication, linguistic cognitology etc. In accordance with such paradigm changes nowadays journalism is frequently understood as the industry of sense-building. Technification, mechanization of mental processes become possible due to the growing importance of "creation, construction and regulation of informational processes" (Zapesockij, 2011, p. 167). Human monopoly on sense-building with the help of the word as a unique mental tool gradually disappears, moreover, this process loses sacredness: "production of senses, appearing in human consciousness, is transforming into an independent branch of economy and goes through all the traditional spheres of production" (Zapesockij, 2011, p. 167). Such a technological and pragmatic decision corresponds with the understanding of mass media as the tools of informational service (Arutyunyan & Vozchikov, 2014), or in general, of social management.

2. Problem Statement

Technological and pragmatic approach to mass media activity understands journalistic texts as media of various levels of complexity of mental and cognitive processes, which exist in the process of concept-building of reality, because nowadays an addressee exist in the situation of cultural diversity and consumption of information of different quality. Media culture, acknowledged as the dominating culture of informational society and existing in the form of traditional and electronic mass media activity, which reflect the social and cultural world view with the help of verbal, visual and sound images, is the "culture-universum, combining the functional diversity of mass, folk, elite cultures" (Arutyunyan & Vozchikov, 2014, p. 23). Coming from the typology of the contemporary culture by Kostina (2009) who detects elite, traditional (folk) and mass cultures and the idea of diversity of value codes and social identities (Sidorov, 2016), "value breach" (Frolova, 2015, p. 27), we believe that traditional division of printed mass media onto the levels of content, i.e. quality (sometimes synonymously mentioned as "elite", "solid" (Korkonosenko, 2011, p. 88)) and mass (sometimes mentioned as "boulevard") (Korkonosenko, 2011, 2016; Shkondin & Resnyanskaya, 2009), does not completely considers the character of multicultural media practices. So we offer the ternary typology of printed mass media instead of the binary one: elite / quality / mass, correlating the elite, traditional and mass culture (Kostina, 2009).

Thus, sense-building inevitably comes across the polydiscourse of mass media, which obey different cognitive strategies of content-making due to the audience diversity: building certain concepts in different competing discourses, they "seek" their addressee, and in his turn the addressee identifies himself with one of them. Under cognitive strategies we agree to understand the mental sets, meant to radically change the information in order to construct the world view.

3.   Research Questions

The elite "filter" in our classification of the press, correlating the elite culture, is the so-called "fat" magazines, which are the unique product of contemporary media culture. They genetically are connected with literature, satire and encyclopedic magazines of the 18-19th centuries, and later with the Soviet "fat" literature and social and political magazines. Such editions, demonstrating the high level of cultural generalization, sum up the humanitarian tendencies of time in the social dimension, and in personal one they form the social adequacy and individual identity, they construct a special modus of his behaviour, connected with his activity and creation of new cultural forms in the process of his entry into the world of common culture. The source of the material is the magazine "Znamya" ("Banner"), oriented onto the Western liberal and democratic ideals.

The culture of the so-called "casual" intelligent people – middle-level – is presented with the discourse of quality press, in our case it is the weekly magazine "Russian Reporter" (RR). The informational policy of RR has both philosophically generalizing and pragmatic character: it informs the citizens and analyzed the processes in economic, political and cultural life of the country with the help of expert judgments and opinions, in other words, it navigates the reader through the new social and economic background, producing general and consolidated views on the acute social problems. Correspondingly, the search for personal identity is centered on the subject of civil society construction. From the viewpoint of communicative realization, the quality press illustrates the transition from "monologue to dialogue", which presupposes an "inevitable activation of civil participation in the formation of directions and measures of social development", "transition from informational accompaniment to informational partnership" (Dzyaloshinskij & Dzyaloshinskaya, 2015, p. 349).

Also in media cultural field, including the mass culture, there are intellectual and spiritual demands of the most of population, general public. The mass-level is represented with such mass editions as "Komsomolskaya Pravda" ("Komsomol Truth") (KT), which satisfy the informational and recreational interests of the audience, the accent of attention being focused on the society column instead of the social and political subjects. The personal identity is created and it belongs to the society of mass consumption.

Thus, the chosen sources reflect different levels of journalistic "reflection and analyses" and the value conflict as well (Frolova, 2015, p. 27-28).

4.   Purpose of the Study

The purpose being to consider sense-building in a certain mental formation / unit in three types of journalistic discourse, determined by various mental and cognitive strategies of content-making, we turned to the concept "truth" as quite a remarkable mental unit in conditions of the so-called post-truth and postmodernist plurality. Plurality and differentiation of norm and value systems in contemporary Russia is seen as the main vectors of axiological dynamic (Mareeva, 2015). The postmodernist pluralism, leading to the relativism, the loss of stable orients, cultivation of unlimited choice, equality of opinions, positions and values (Emelin, 2017), creates the situation of multiple and equal "read" of basic value concepts, "truth" being undoubtedly one of them.

5.   Research Methods

The continuous sampling method helped to make the empiric database of 172 texts (124 text units in "Banner", 14 in RR, 34 in KT). (The database was collected with the Russian Scientific Fund financial support 16-18-02032). We analyzed all the 2016 text massive in the magazines "Banner", RR and the newspaper KT, in which we met verbalizors of the concept "truth": these are the words with the root -tru- (supporting the experiment validity, we did not analyze prosaic and poetic texts in the "fat" magazine, using only publicistic and journalistic).

The main methodological instrument is the "concept" – the basic heuristic unit of the Russian linguistic conceptology (Vorkachev, 2010, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017; Karasik, 2015a, 2015b; Krasavskij, 2016, 2017; Maslova, 2016). The concept is a mental unit (a unit of consciousness), having a cultural specific and a name (expressed in the language). The main obligatory characteristics of the concept (meaning a linguistic cultural one) are: 1) worthiness; 2) multimensionality (the presence of semantically different components); 3) discoursive variety; 4) hierarchy (system dependence of signs) due to its core-periphery organization (Vorkachev, 2015).

The core-periphery structure of the concept is based upon the field principle (method) of description of language phenomena in a wider semiotic interpretation. The main statement in the field method, which is well-developed and well-tested in the linguistic science, is the idea of a field (semantic, linguistic and cultural, lexical and phraseological, conceptological etc.) as a dynamic core-periphery space, the fragments and elements of which interact with each other. Modeling the conceptual field "truth" in the discoursive journalistic practices and generalizing different methods of research of field structures, we were governed by the following statements (Vorob'ev, 1997; Kadyrova, 2014):

1) the conceptual (or conceptological) field is mainly forecast by the semantic field and is an inventory of elements having the semantic commonness, where the meaning of a single unit depends upon the meaning of the near elements, i.e. on the other components of the given semantic paradigm; in other words, a filed is an "organized multitude of elements, having a common (invariant) meaning" (Vorob'ev, 1997, p. 7);

2) the field structure has components, which are conditioned by a certain sense content, a filed dominant;

3) the field structure possesses the core, the near core zone (classes of the main notions, phenomena with their synonymic, antonymic and other relations with the maximal concentration of filed-making signs) and the periphery (the system of close phenomena, notions of the secondary semantic functions, comprising the zone with weak intensiveness of the field-making signs);

4) the core (the semantic center) is consolidated around the dominating component, and the periphery often has a zone organization (the near and far periphery), thus, the minimal content units (elements) of the concept, i.e. senses, are in different zones of the conceptual field, and the stronger is the semantic connection of a sense with the name of the conceptual field, the closer it stands to the center;

5) the core constituents are specialized to perform the field functions, they perform the field function directly, they are more frequent in comparison with other elements and are necessary for the field;

6) the margin between the core and the periphery and its single zones is uncertain, unclear.

Thus, the core-periphery sense-building within the conceptual field, the reduction of some sense elements or, on the contrary, the appearance of new ones depends upon the cognitive strategies of a certain type of the printed edition.

The research had three stages: the primary reconstruction of usual (common-language, common for all the language bearers) model of the conceptual field "truth" as the starting mental point for further comparison, the later discursive models in the texts of elite, quality and mass editions, and compared the common-language and the discursive models.

6. Findings

The common-language (usual) model of the concept "truth", in accordance with lexicographical sources, may be described as the following:

- the core zone: "something real, true";

- the near core zone: "a correct reflection of the reality in human consciousness", "practically proven judgment";

- the near periphery: "sincerity", "justice", "honour", "conscience", "loyalty";

- the far periphery: "life principle", "position", "legitimacy", "openness", "dignity", "decency", "courage", "something a person believes in", "sermon", "Motherland" etc.

Thus, the core semantic, as the dictionaries illustrate the naïve world view, is connected with the "truth of a fact", the near core – with the "truth of a thought". This is an important difference of the naïve world view from the scientific one: the latest postulates the mental-reflexive and constant-imperative (not depending upon experience) nature of truth. Pushkareva (2018) notices that the notion of truth is connected with the truth of a thought: not a fact is characterized as true, valid, but a judgment; this is the constant beginning of the world, which cannot be apprehended with experience.

We shall pass from the common-language model onto the discursive practices. We shall characterize the structure of the same concept in the discourse of the magazine "Banner":

- the semantic center: "authenticity" (47 contexts);

- the near core zone: "something real, true" (21); "practically proven judgments" (16);

- the near periphery: "something a person longs to (quite often – subconsciously)" (12); "something which is hard to gain, which one struggles for, which demands courage" (12);

- the far periphery: "a maximum which is not needed today and is not demanded" (4); "own position, different from others, which has a meaning for a certain person" (4); "something naturally understood" (3); "moral and ethical ideal" (2); "the balance of definitely opposite views" (2); "a life goal which is achieved through various spiritual practices" (1).

The comparison of both models allows speaking about the sense transformation which clearly demonstrates the substitution of criteria for trial of truth, because in the usual core the truth, according to the classic rationality, corresponds the reality (this means objectiveness), but in the discursive core it is attributed through the categories of postmodern philosophy (it means subjectiveness): "authenticity vs. inauthenticity (simulation)". "The truth loses the objective status and is seen as a form of psychological state of a person (S. Kierkedaard), as a value which "do not exist, but means" (G. Rickert), a speculative ideal construct" (Gricanov & Mozhejko, 2001). Thus, the main cognitive strategy of constructing the

concept "truth" in the discourse of the elite press becomes the subjective authenticity and praxeology. Simply saying, truth is something what a human thinks is authentic, and not something which is authentic in reality:

> *Upon the restoration of relations which tremble in the balance, we could not escape. As it often happens, we argued. Softly and gently. A personal experience for A.K. – the ultimate* **truth**. *If he does not understand something, it is not necessary for understanding. If he does not want something, he cannot understand why others want that.* (Gladkov, 2016, para. 11).

The periphery senses also became new and unique: "something which is hard to gain, which one struggles for, which demands courage"; "a maximum which is not needed today and is not demanded"; "own position, different from others, which has a meaning for a certain person". The last component underlines the praxeology of "truth".

This model is usual for the quality press, which is in the middle segment:

- the core sense: "something real, true" (10 contexts);

- the periphery components: "something one should long to, achieve" (2); "something uncertain, understood after a long thinking; a situation of choice, a life position" (1); "authenticity" (1).

We may observe the identity of senses of the usual and discursive models (at least on the level of the core). This proves, at first, the priority of the reproducing function for the quality press; and secondly, the given semantic element has an objective character on the contrary to the elite press (with a great number of subjective texts), which is important especially for a quality edition that offers its readers true, objective and argumentative information. The quality press clearly understands its informative and mental calling in the polysubjective media space. The absence of semantic transformations and the comparatively small number of the senses found in this conceptual field tell about the informative stabilizing and reproducing mission of a quality magazine.

The model of the analyzed concept in mass editions may be defined as:

- the core: "authenticity" (16);

- the near core zone: "practically proven judgments" (10);

- the periphery: "something real, true" (4); "faith" (2); "own position, different from others, which has a meaning for a certain person" (1); "a maximum which is not needed today and is not demanded" (1): *Not everybody needs* **truth**. *Too many interests are in the nuclear energy, so unfortunately not everybody needs* **truth** (KT. 24. 04. 2016).

Again, we observe, as in the case of the elite segment, the substitute of foundation of trial of truth: truth is not what is real, it is something what a person thinks is real. Thus, there is a change in the matrix of concept-making and the paradigm of philosophy as the way to understand the truth: a classical rational category of real is denied and changed for the postmodern category of authenticity, originality (or inauthenticity, copy, simulation). So we may speak about the subjective authenticity and praxeology as cognitive strategies of sense-making in mass editions, but the difference is that the journalists of "Komsomol Truth" work with a set of stable world-view clichés, they particularly address the precedent texts as a manipulative way of argumentation, because critical perception of such texts is greatly

decreasing, the quotations of authoritative people are automatically considered as axioms. The journalists build their "secondary" statements in different ways (they name the author of the set phrase; they use epithets "famous", "basic", "well-known" with the word "truth", abandoning the responsibility for the absence of arguments): *"**Truth** is in wine". A favourite set phrase of alcoholics. In reality the writer Plinius the Senior (the 1st century AD) said: "In vino veritas, in aqua sanitas", which means "**truth** is in wine, but health is in water"* (KT. 12. 10. 2016). *Sergey Bodrov told everything about truth: "**Truth** is in verity"* (KT. 22. 06. 2016). *– Whether we addressed, the answer is the same – no money! But there is a famous **truth**: no art center – no village, – Ramsia Garaeva sighs* (KT. 10. 05. 2016). *This mantra is repeated by cardiologists of all hospitals in all countries. What can we say – it is the basic **truth*** (KT. 30. 07. 2016). Thus, in both editions we may see the ironic modus, but in the elite editions it is presented with the intellectual criticism, but in mass editions it is expressed through the "low" variant – "carnival".

If we speak about the "traditional classic" concept-making of "truth" in mass editions (truth is something real, 4 text units), the primary status of "truth" as a moral and ethic category, identical to "verity", decreases until the level of utilizing and consuming relations: *The **truth** was found quickly: when dressing the lady just changed brand clothes for cheap forgery* (KT. 02. 06. 2016). *Talks on the necessity of writing down the losses and keeping budget seemed habits of pedants, but in the situation of 400-rubled "trap" the **truth** was revealed: so much money is wasted. A really unnecessary crap!* (KT. 19. 10. 2016).

7. Conclusion

The sense of the concept "truth" in the discourse of the quality press was slightly transformed (exclusively on the level of periphery). The discoursive model of quality editions on the whole coincided with the common-language one, which proves the importance of the value-retranslating, reproducing function and objectiveness as the characteristic of the offered information for this segment of printed mass media. The quality press clearly understands its informative and mental calling in the polysubjective media space, offering its readers true, objective, argumentative information.

The concept under analyses is influenced by transformational processes in the elite and mass editions. Moreover, these editions, so different in their content, demonstrated the similar cognitive strategies of modification: 1) "subjective authenticity" (subjective and personal understanding of truth), 2) "praxeology" (truth found through experience, practice). But technologically they are embodied differently: elite editions use innovative, creative senses through affective contradictions in journalistic texts, initiating the fiction conflict and the cathartic reaction of the readers (Safonov, 2010, p. 117), but the mass ones have stereotyped, expected senses, using mental stereotypes.

Acknowledgments

References

Arutyunyan, A. YU., & Vozchikov, V. A. (2014). Mediaobrazovanie – vvedenie v mediakul'turu [Media education – introduction to media culture]. *Gumanizaciya obrazovaniya, 1,* 21-25.

Dzyaloshinskij, I. M., & Dzyaloshinskaya, M. I. (2015). Ot informacionnogo soprovozhdeniya k informacionnomu partnerstvu [From information support to information partnership]. *Voprosy teorii i praktiki zhurnalistiki, 4*(4), 349-365.

Emelin, V. A. (2017). Krizis postmodernizma i poterya ustojchivoj identichnosti [The crisis of postmodernism and the loss of a stable identity]. *Nacional'nyj psihologicheskij zhurnal, 2*(26), 5-15.

Frolova, T. I. (2015). *Gumanitarnaya povestka rossijskih smi: teoreticheskaya model', zhurnalistskie praktiki, strategii razvitiya [Humanitarian agenda of the Russian media: theoretical model, journalistic practices, development strategies].* Moscow.

Gladkov, A. (2016). Dnevnikovye zapisi. 1972 god [Diary entry. 1972]. *Banner*, 4. Retrieved from http://znamlit.ru/publication.php?id=6234

Gricanov, A. A., & Mozhejko, M. A. (2001). *Postmodernizm [Postmodernism].* Retrieved from https://www.gumer.info/bogoslov_Buks/Philos/PostModern/_32.php

Kadyrova, G. R. (2014). Teoreticheskie podhody k ponyatiyu polya v lingvistike [Theoretical approaches to the concept of field in linguistics]. *Mezhdunarodnyj zhurnal prikladnyh i fundamental'nyh issledovanij, 12,* 237-241.

Karasik, V. I. (2015a). *Yazykovoe proyavlenie lichnosti [Language manifestation of personality].* Moscow: Gnozis.

Karasik, V. I. (2015b). *Yazykovaya spiral': cennosti, znaki, motivy [Spiral language: values, symbols, and motifs].* Volgograd: Paradigm.

Korkonosenko, S. G. (2011). *Vvedenie v zhurnalistiku [Introduction to journalism].* Moscow: Knorus.

Korkonosenko, S. G. (2016). *Osnovy zhurnalistiki [Fundamentals of journalism].* Moscow: Knorus.

Kostina, A. V. (2009). *Sootnoshenie i vzaimodejstvie tradicionnoj, ehlitarnoj i massovoj kul'tur v social'nom prostranstve sovremennosti [Correlation and interaction of traditional, elite and mass cultures in the social space of modernity].* Moscow.

Krasavskij, N. A. (2016). Koncepty "strah" i "zhestokost'" v novelle Franca Kafki "Prevrashchenie" [The concepts of "fear" and "cruelty" in the novel of Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis"]. *Filologicheskie nauki. Voprosy teorii i praktiki, 8*(62), 100-103.

Krasavskij, N. A. (2017). Koncept "bezzhalostnost'" v romane Roberta Muzilya "Dushevnye smuty vospitannika Tyorlesa" [The concept of "ruthlessness" in the novel by Robert Musil "The emotional turmoil of the pupil of Teresa"]. *Izvestiya Volgogradskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universiteta, 7*(120), 155-158.

Mareeva, S. V. (2015). Cennostnaya palitra sovremennogo rossijskogo obshchestva [The value palette of modern Russian society]. *Monitoring obshchestvennogo mneniya: ehkonomicheskie i social'nye peremeny, 4*, 50-65.

Maslova, V. A. (2016). *Vvedenie v kognitivnuyu lingvistiku [Introduction to cognitive linguistics].* Moscow: Flinta.

Pushkareva, I. (2018). O lingvoaksiologicheskom issledovanii regional'nogo mediadiskursa [On linguoaxiological research of regional media discourse]. *Przegląd Wschodnioeuropejski, 9*(1), 239-249.

Safonov, A. V. (2010). Sistema affektivnyh protivorechij sovremennogo gazetnogo teksta [The system of affective contradictions of the modern newspaper text]. *Vestnik Chelyabinskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 11*(192), 117-118.

Shkondin, M. V., & Resnyanskaya, L. L. (Eds.). (2009). *Tipologiya periodicheskoj pechati [Typology of periodicals].* Moscow: Aspect Press.

Sidorov, V. A. (2016). *Aksiologiya zhurnalistiki [Axiology of journalism].* St. Petersburg: Petropolis.

Vorkachev, S. G. (2010). "Kuda zh nam plyt'?" – lingvokul'turnaya konceptologiya: sovremennoe sostoyanie, problemy, vektor razvitiya ["Where shall we sail?" – linguocultural conceptology:

current state, problems, vector of development]. *Yazyk, kommunikaciya i social'naya sreda, 8,* 5-27.

Vorkachev, S. G. (2014). Lingvokul'turnaya konceptologiya i ee terminosistema (prodolzhenie diskussii) [Linguocultural conceptlogy and its terminological system (continuation of discussion)]. *Politicheskaya lingvistika, 3*(49), 12-20.

Vorkachev, S. G. (2015). K terminosisteme lingvokul'turnoj konceptologii [On the terminological system of linguocultural conceptology]. *Izvestiya Volgogradskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universiteta, 3*(98), 112–116.

Vorkachev, S. G. (2016). Ex pluribus unum: lingvokul'turnyj koncept kak sinteznoe obrazovanie [Ex pluribus unum: linguo-cultural concept as a synthesis education]. *Vestnik Rossijskogo universiteta druzhby narodov. Seriya: Lingvistika, 2,* 17-30.

Vorkachev, S. G. (2017). *Strana svoya i chuzhaya: ideya patriotizma v lingvokul'ture [Their own country and a stranger: the idea of patriotism in the linguistic culture]*. Moscow: INFRA-M.

Vorob'ev, V. V. (1997). *Lingvokul'turologiya (teoriya i metody) [Linguoculturology (theory and methods)]*. Moscow: Publishing house of the peoples ' friendship University of Russia.

Zapesockij, A. S. (2011). Transformacii kul'tury: proizvodstvo smyslov i upravlenie informacionnymi potokami [Transformation of culture: production of meanings and management of information flows]. *Voprosy filosofii, 5,* 166-171.