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THE VALUABLE CONSTITUENT OF THE ENGLISH COMMUNICATIVE STYLE IN SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract

The development of present-day civilization stipulates the appearance of new technologies and means of communication, which provokes the introduction of new terms to name the latest phenomena. One of such phenomenon that is being actively studied nowadays is the Internet discourse. Everyone takes advantage of the Internet at present. Mass communication in social media is one of the widespread means of communication in the contemporary society. Alongside with traditional one-way means of mass communication such as radio, television and printed media there have appeared electronic means of mass communication that preview two-way interaction. A great variety of social networks implying bilateral communication have appeared over the last decade. One of them is well-respected social media platform called Twitter. Core values, beliefs and intentions existing in the modern society and those ones that undergo the stage of formation are communicated through accounts in Twitter. The article under consideration is aimed at analyzing the peculiarities of impact of the American social media on the values of the modern society within the frameworks of the English communicative style. More importantly, one of the goals of the current study is to distinguish the values that are conveyed via official accounts of mass media allocated in Twitter.

Keywords: Mass media discourse, social media, English communicative style, value, ideology.

1. Introduction

Mass media discourse is a regulatory mechanism that modifies people's mind by forming socially relevant cognitive meanings. It can be considered as a polycode unity possessing hidden impacts affecting and transforming collective consciousness. Taking into account the boom of social networking nowadays, mass media are also affected by this trend. Newspaper and magazines all over the world create their official accounts in social media platforms. Social media discourse, being a part of mass media discourse, greatly affects ideology and world view of the audience. The focus of social media is on how users interact, that is, attention on users' behaviors. A wide variety of social media exists, ranging from social sharing sites to social networking sites. Even though each social medium retains some uniqueness, today a general convergence in terms of offering similar online contents (e.g., textual, visual, audio) and affordances is occurring. These types of social media offer more explicit information on the quality of relationships between social actors than those focusing on pictures only (Valentini, 2015; Gee, 2014). We have highlighted some distinct features of the social media discourse within the frameworks of the English national communicative style. English national communicative style is a multifaceted phenomenon, which reveals national cultural peculiarities of communication. Communication is embedded in culture, which serves as its context and is based on the prior experience of a community. In intercultural relations culture is the most important extralinguistic factor shaping its members' communicative style and behavior (Larina, 2015; Leech & Larina, 2014). National communicative style is situated at the junction of communication studies, culturology and pragmalinguistics. Thus, it is regarded as an integral essence possessing culturally and linguistically determined nature (Kulikova, 2006). To identify the characteristic features of a national communicative style, one has to study separate words and their meanings, utterances, concepts; motives, aims of communication; interests, attitudes, intentionality. Taking everything mentioned above into the consideration, three constituents of a national communicative style can be distinguished:

- Conceptual constituent (names of concepts and their cognate words, phrases including names of concepts, associative field, subjective verbal definitions and dictionary interpretations, full texts).

- Valuable constituent of liguoculture (evaluative words, mental images, metaphors, the presence of the concept in oppositions valuable for certain culture, cultural dominants).

- Communicative-pragmatic constituent (motives, intentions, strategies, tactics) (Ivanova, 2012).

National communicative style is formed under the influence of socio-cultural relations, cultural values, norms and traditions that are characteristic features of a certain culture. In the present paper we deal with the cultural values, beliefs and intentions existing in the modern American society.

2. Problem Statement

The topicality of the research on the one hand is closely connected with the necessity to study newly-appeared forms of mass communication from the perspective of the national communicative style. It's rather vital to understand how modern mass media influence the world view of contemporary people. Social networks have engulfed mankind and social media nowadays shape greatly people's views dictating some rules and imposing certain values. The structure of an overall network system can be

determined through data that indicate shared points of interaction or type of relationship among actors (Sommerfeldt & Kent, 2015; Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015). At the same time the communicative role of the audience isn't passive any longer. People have opportunities to instantly reply the authors of entries. On the other hand, the topicality deals with values being communicated via social media discourse. Such values are considered to be beliefs, principles, standards, obligations, interests, intentions existing in the national communicative style.

3. Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in the present study:

1. What is social media discourse?
2. What are the constituents of the English communicative style?
3. What is the valuable constituent of the English national communicative style?
4. What are the peculiarities of the actualization of the concept PRESSURE in the English communicative style?
5. Which values does the concept under consideration represent?

4. Purpose of the Study

Within the frameworks of the current paper we are aimed to study a part of the English communicative style represented in the social media discourse. Social media are communicatively constituted environments given that social media users consume, use, create, co-create, and share forms of communicative expressions that are shaped in textual, audio, and visual contents. These constitute the form, quality, and type of social interactions and, thus, the relationships that occur in social media (Cooren & Sandler, 2014). The purpose of our study is to analyse the ways of influencing and even manipulating people via the means of social media. These ways are closely connected with the valuable constituent of the English national communicative style. Some relevant concepts reveal core values of the present-day world community. PRESSURE is one of such concepts nowadays due to the tense international climate. Thus, it is necessary to learn the mechanisms of generating such concepts as part of national communicative style in social media discourse.

5. Research Methods

We have studied 530 entries taken from the official accounts of American newspapers and magazines (such as CNN, The New York Times, Time) with the help of data-fetching method. We also employ the following methods in our research:

- synchronous linguistic description (used for selecting, systematising and describing of utterances);
- socio-cultural and linguistic modelling;
- evaluation (used for analysing the utterances and contexts);
- interpretation (used for explaining the meaning);

- contextual analysis (used for analysing historic and cultural settings and characterizing the text as a text).

6. Findings

In this article we study the valuable constituent of the English national communicative style in the Internet discourse, more precisely, social media discourse. The Internet discourse has appeared due to the development of modern information technologies and scientific advance. The Internet discourse is the process of text creation together with pragmatic, sociocultural, psychological factors (Zagoruiko, 2012). Akhrenova (2013) considers Internet discourse as a definite type of discourse the uniqueness of which is revealed in all its spheres: there are some graphic, orthographic, lexical and grammatical peculiarities. Therefore, a new type of discourse has evolved – oral-written one. Social networks encompass all the above-mentioned peculiarities. Each official account allocated in such networks can be considered as a blog consisting of discrete entries that preview instant feedback. Thus, a blog is both the way of sharing some information and the profound means of communication (Litvinenko, 2016).

The valuable constituent of the English communicative style is revealed through evaluative words, mental images, metaphors, concepts, etc. When a concept is expressed in a particular language, the linguistic means of its realization become the means of verbalization of the concept in the language. Thus, it's rather vital to study all the linguistic units objectifying the concept (Sternin, 2002). To provide a profound study of values communicated via social media we have to distinguish some peculiarities of the concepts in the entries of American newspapers and magazine. We consider the concept PRESSURE as being one of the key concepts existing in the modern world community and characterizing the situation in the world arena. Thus, we've analysed 530 entries allocated in the official accounts of American newspapers and magazines in Twitter containing the word *pressure*, its derivatives and other relevant words possessing synonymous meanings. Twitter is a world-popular microblogging system that allows the user to allocate short text messages (up to 280 words, but the common size of the entry is 140 words) with the help of web interface. The characteristic feature of Twitter is an instant public availability of posted messages giving the opportunity to provide feedback, view a large number of photos and videos over a short period of time. Each self-respecting organization and institution use Twitter to interact with internal and external constituents (Albu & Etter, 2016; Yang & Taylor, 2015).

To prove the core position of the concept PRESSURE in the contemporary international society, the definitions of the word *pressure* have been. It has been concluded that PRESSURE is 1) an attempt to persuade, threaten, or force someone to do something; 2) a worried feeling that you get when you have to deal with a difficult or complicated situation (Macmillan dictionary, URL). Consequently, PRESSURE can be of different size starting from personal fears, regrets and apprehensions and up to the warnings and threats to the whole country and even the whole world. To find out all the values conveyed by the concept, its cultural meaning one has to analyse all the contexts containing the core word nominating the concept, its derivatives, synonyms and contextual synonyms.

We consider the word PRESSURE being a core element of the lexico-semantic field PRESSURE nominating the homonymous concept. We can enlarge this list by adding other lexical units with almost the same meaning: *tension*, *force*, *stress*, *strain*, *burden,* which comprise the close periphery of the lexico-

semantic field under consideration. The concept of PRESSURE can be expressed both explicitly (revealed through the core word, derivatives, synonyms) and implicitly (when just the intention of pressure is present in the utterance). Intentionality is achieved by means of emphatic lexical units, incorrect word order, capitalization, usage of excessive punctuation marks, etc. In the following example we can see the explicit way of expressing the concept:

Breaking news: The British opposition Labour Party said it would support a new Brexit referendum, offering new hope to opponents of withdrawal from the U.E. Labour. Party Leader, Under Pressure, Backs a new Brexit Referendum (The New York Times). In the light of the current political situation in Britain Jeremy Corbyn, the leader of the UK Labour party has to take some measures against his will (under pressure). Topical overseas political issues garner American media coverage. This fact proves the existence of a vivid interest in domestic affairs of foreign countries from the side of the USA government.

'I have never been called this much by a president in my life', Lindsey Graham said. 'It's weird, and it's flattering, and it creates some opportunity. It also creates some pressure' (The New York Times). In the utterance some worried feelings of one person are described. They are intensified by the gradation (weird-flattering-opportunity-pressure) that underlines some hesitation at the part of Lindsey Graham and it makes clear that he fully realises all the importance of the current situation.

In some utterances the idea of pressure is conveyed implicitly and only the intention of threat or tension can be deduced out of the context. It is expressed by different words that are not even contextual synonyms to the core word pressure:

Live: President Trump and Kim Jong Un's talks abruptly ended early. Watch the press conference live. (Time) The pressure can be perceived at the end of the first sentence through such adverbs as *abruptly* and *early* that characterize the situation as being out-of-order. The papers were not signed and the leaders ended the meeting before its due time.

Thematically the news entries in the official media accounts in Twitter can be chiefly referred to the spheres of politics, social relations, and ethics. They arise essential issues connected with the norms and regulations existing in the countries and the world as a whole, political situation both in the international arena and some particular countries, military conflicts, terrorism threat, rights of certain groups of people, entertainment.

A look back at Putin's K.G.B. background casts light on Russia's use of tactics that include political arrests, subversion, disinformation, assassination, fake news, espionage, and the weaponization of lies (The New York Times). This piece of news implicitly suggests the idea of tension in relationships between Russia and the USA. The leader of the Russian Federation is blamed for all the misfortunes happening in the world. Pressure is created with the help of noun gradation (enumeration of homonymous words). The nouns in the utterance all have a negative connotation.

Alongside with the mentioned above synonyms to the word pressure we can distinguish some contextual synonyms such as *threat*, *terrorism*, *abuse, attempt (to do something)* typical of portraying present-day situation and explaining modern developments. These lexical units are classified as far periphery of the concept PRESSURE.

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On Sunday, Pope Francis compared the abuse of minors to 'sacrificing human beings, frequently children, in pagan rites.' Pope Francis Calls for 'All-Out Battle' to Fight Scourge of Sexual Abuse (The New York Times). In the entry the Pope appeals to advocate the rights of minors that are being violated nowadays by comparing this situation with some pagan rites. Pagan rites were barbarous and inhumane literally putting people under pressure. Thus, the ethic issue arises. In this context the words abuse and pressure can be named as contextual synonyms. And one more example of such a synonym with the collocation attempt to destroy: Bernie Sanders on Russian interference in US elections: 'The word has got to go out to Putin and others around the world that cyber warfare, the attempt to destroy American democracy, is a very, very serious offense which will not be taken lightly' (CNN). American mass media still put blame on the Russian President and regard him as being guilty in influencing the results of the president elections in November 2016. In the utterance the phrase attempt to destroy is very close to the meaning of the word pressure.

7. Conclusion

Social media have dramatically gained popularity over the last 10 years due to the rapid growth of Internet-based communication technologies allowing us to get some instant information and become active participants of the interaction who comment, analyse and even edit the entries allocated on various online platforms. Mass media take opportunity to communicate some values of the present-day society on their accounts in social networks trying to shape the audience's views. All the values allocated in social media are a constituent of the national communicative style.

Having studied the core values of the American society expressed by the concept PRESSURE, we can conclude that the key ones are peace (both in the native country and in the world as a whole), stability (in the lives of the people), non-violence (in relations among different countries in the world as well as among various social groups within one country). The values in the English communicative style are revealed both explicitly (with exact lexical units) and implicitly (the reader is guided by the intention in the utterance). We have made calculations and can conclude that the entries in the official mass media accounts in the social media platform Twitter are more explicit rather than implicit. Major beliefs and intentions are revealed through exact words representing the concept under consideration in speech.

In this article, we have studied the valuable constituent of the English communicative style and discovered that such values as peace, stability, non-violence are predominant in the American society at present. All these values are communicated in such important spheres as politics, ethics, social issues.

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