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MODERN PROTEST COMMUNICATION IN RUSSIA AND GERMANY: IMPORTANT ISSUES IN RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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Abstract

The article is devoted to providing scientific ground for the methodology of integrative, comparative system-communicative research of modern protest communication in Russia and Germany. Along with the application of an integrative approach (involving application of the achievements in this field of linguistics, sociology, political science, cultural studies, media psychology); a system-communicative approach (aimed at studying the main characteristics of protest – spatiotemporal parameters, correlating with the main forms of protest activity; subject-specific parameter; collective-personal parameters); a comparative approach (used to determine general characteristics and linguistic, social, cultural specificity of protest communication (using the example of Russia and Germany)) the rejection to interpret a protest as a phenomenon of anomie (assuming the description of protest communication regarding the parameters of satisfactoriness) is significant. The relevance of the project is determined by the need to understand the phenomenon of protest in the context of modern information and communication space and the dominant role of communication as a semantic core of information society, the importance of studying new forms and significant changes in the process of communication, subjects of communication, communicative experience of the subject / subjects, formats of collective interaction in the context of globalization of the media. The results of the project will have scientific significance, contributing to further development of the communicative theory of protest, the theory of modern social communication, Internet communication, protest communication; further understanding of the communicative nature of social phenomena, the relationship of technological and socio-cultural changes.

1. Introduction

Modern protest communication functions under the conditions of the active development of information and communicative, social technologies and e-democracy. Despite its social significance, wide dissemination and the role of crisis and conflict situations as manifestations of individuality, identity, freedom of life of a society, with all the severity of the consequences of poor communication in relevant situations, the chosen object of research is understudied. Communication is the core of the information society. Changes in modern retial mass communication in the information society are associated not only with transformations of its forms and structure of the subject's communicative experience (due to the globalization of the media), not only with a new attitude to information, its value, reliability and personalization of information, but also with the multiplication of the subjects of modern (electronic) mass communication, with changes in the audience itself (evaluated by different researchers either as independent, or as easily managed), in particular, with changes in its rationality, with the transformations of the collective and individual (non-local) state of mind, with new formats and mechanisms of virtual-mediated collective interactions, the development of "Net-thinking". A number of scientists consider these changes as the formation of a new human psychotype, as well as the emergence of a hypersubject with hyperpsychics (Ksenofontova, 2014; Kurbatov, 2017; Pronina, 2001). The relevance of the research problematic is determined by the need to understand the phenomenon of protest not only in the context of modern information and communication space (as an interaction of technological and socio-cultural changes), but also in the context of dialectics of the general and linguistic, social, cultural specific; by the significance of the phenomenon for understanding modern political and social space.

2. Problem Statement

Modern protest communication functioning in different linguistic and cultural communities in a rapidly changing information and communication space with its new information, social and communication technologies, is an important and insufficiently studied object of research. At the same time linguistics has a significant heuristic potential within the framework of the above-mentioned problematic, especially if «interdisciplinary cooperation» is provided. Taking into account the relationship between technological and socio-cultural changes, resulting significant changes in the process itself and the subjects of communication, an actual task is to develop a methodology for integrated integrative research (focused on integrating the achievements of related fields of humanitarian knowledge, for example, linguistics, sociology, political science, cultural studies, media psychology) of the system-communicative characteristics of modern protest.

3. Research Questions

The main issues covered in this article are of a methodological nature and include a critical review of the state of research in this sphere in different relevant areas of knowledge, substantiating the relevance of the study, determining adequate approaches (or rather, their combinations), determining the research material, developing research steps, predicting significant qualitatively new results.

4. Purpose of the Study

The research is aimed at developing and establishing a scientific rationale for the methodology of an integrative, comparative system-communicative study of modern protest communication in Russia and Germany oriented on characterizing system-communicative parameters of modern protest regarding changes of information and communication space, regarding parameters of satisfactoriness and dialectics of the general and linguistic, social, cultural specific.

5. Research Methods

Carrying out the research basic logical methods relevant for theoretical research were used: analysis, synthesis, induction, generalization, classification, and abstraction.

6. Findings

6.1. Important issues in research methodology: Current state of research in this sphere

Within the framework of social Sciences modern protest as new forms of political participation and self-organization of citizens based on new media, communicative and social technologies is considered from the positions of two main approaches: 1) structural-critical approach (the main agents of protest do not belong to institutions; structural deformations and problems of society motivate the protest, its goal is to protect the traditional, culturally determined way of life, identities, and culture) (Beyerlein, Barwis, Crubaugh, & Carnesecca, 2018; Evans, 2016; Gabowitsch, 2016); 2) resource-mobilization approach (protest organizations are quasi-economic institutions; the goal is to compete with other institutions in the struggle for resources) (Hagemann & Kufenko, 2016; Lankina & Skovoroda, 2016). Modern researchers, however, proceed from system-communicative autonomy (Barash & Antonovskij, 2018); they say (and we tend to agree with them) about self-reproduction, autopoiesis, self-validation, and the catalyzation function of protest (topics are defined by the perspective and needs of the observer and manifest reality); about the structural connection with the system of political communication (protest compensates for the lack of observation of reality, that a self-referentially arranged policy has; the objectivity of the thematized reality is provided by the threat index); about the unity of the proactive in protest (communication about the situation turns it into a social factor initially in the observational perspective of the protest) and the reactive in the protest (in its self-descriptions the protest appears as solving the task created by itself); about non-institutionalization of modern protest as its systemic property (Barash & Antonovskij, 2018).

At the same time, sociologists and political scientists, examining today's forms of political participation in the conditions of electronic / online / cloud / Internet democracy, point to ambiguous assessments of the latter as a modern format of communication between the government and society, due to a) new opportunities and b) new risks: a) speed of information flow, absence of time and geographical borders, reduction of resource costs, expansion of citizens 'access to information and practices of political participation, effective practices of solidarity and transparency of new practices of political participation, increase of the effectiveness of feedback, representation of citizens' own interests at different levels

without intermediaries by virtue of expanding the "democracy of direct participation", possibility of a new, softer management of conflict situations (Rebrina, 2019); b) digital inequality, expansion of non-democracy, administration of information and new opportunities for strengthening state control, discrepancy between the structures of formed network communities and the structure of society, transience, superficiality of relations, «spiral of silence» as an attribute of public opinion, aggravation of the crisis of representative democracy (deficits of participation, representation, inclusion, sovereignty), spread of practices of political participation without or with minimal responsibility (the phenomenon of clicktivism / slaktivism), strengthening of virtuality as a social state; selectivity of online participation of Internet users, cyber threats, technological determinism of interaction, power (Dudakov, 2019; Rebrina, 2019).

The protest itself is characterized by an active and passive form, autonomous and mobilization, conventional and unconventional, destructive and constructive nature, by different levels of interaction between the government and citizens-from from participating to manipulating citizens' positions (Kelas`ev, Kazakov, & Lejes, 2006). At the same time it is pointed out that the government's strategies for communicating with different groups of the population are underdeveloped and scanty within different forms of political participation. Within the framework of online political participation practices highlighted by political scientists (Kersting, 2014) protest is implemented in the forms of direct democracy (for example, petitions), deliberative (for example, forums, blogs) and demonstrative (for example, mobilization of demonstrations) forms. In recent years, the tools of Computational Social Science have been used to study the patterns of behavior, motives, and goals of users of Internet platforms within the framework of political participation of citizens (Lazer, Kennedy, King, & Vespignani, 2014). Much attention is paid to the diverse characteristics of Internet platforms themselves used for political online participation of citizens, such as Public Policy Advocacy Networks. Sociology emphasizes the different status of protest participants in the participatory pyramid (from "clicktivists" to the authors of protest initiatives) (Baringhorst, 2014; Jungherr & Jürgens, 2011), heterogeneity of protest subjects by their main social characteristics and the need to take into account generational differences of protest subjects (their disparity within different ethno-cultural communities); a special role of social networks in political mobilization of the population (Atanesyan, 2019; Jost et al., 2018; Lee, 2018; Lim & Bouffanais, 2019; Metzger & Tucker, 2017; Wilson, 2017), specifics of the new Internet solidarity (Ksenofontova, 2014).

In view of cultural studies, researchers turn to the consideration of the characteristics of national protest cultures, interpret counterculture as a mechanism for updating culture or as a necessary but insufficient basis for the formation and approval of new, socially significant samples (Mirkovic, 2019).

Actual linguistic studies of protest communication are few and of miscellaneous nature. Heidrun Kämper analyzes protest as a communicative and conceptual phenomenon of fracture; *Christian Bendl и Jürgen Spitzmüller* – regularities of protest construction through mediatization, certain aspects of inter-genre integration (on the example of right-populist protest movements in Austria); Hajo Diemannshenke – subversive practices (Subversion*) as manifestation of protest; Britt-Marie Schuster* – *communicative practices of national socialism resistance movements; Mark Dang-Anh и* Sylvia Jaki – protest practices in Twitter microblog (GAL-50, 2018); S. Pappert и S. Michel (Michel & Pappert, 2018a, 2018b) – strategies

for «critical development» of election posters as a form of protest from the perspective of the addressee (GAL-50, 2018).

Studies of online petitions are presented more widely: the functional value of e-petitions and the means of constructing the author's identity (based on the material of feminist discourse), characteristics of an epistolary language personality and petitions as an epistolary text (Dubrovskaya, 2017); directionality, a broad concept of the agent, strategies for implementing the regulatory function (based on the French environmental discourse), main intentions, composition, images of the author and the addressee (based on the Russian and German languages) (Rebrina, 2019). Blogging as a form of political participation, advantages and disadvantages of blogging have also been repeatedly studied by experts in media linguistics, journalism, media psychology, sociology, and political science, who have expressed diametrically opposite points of view, from Dan Gilmore's hymn to blog journalism as a counteraction to the «gatekeeping» of official media to accusations of «shifting» responsibility for constructing the agenda and worldview to an incompetent user following the «collective mind» (Asmolov & Asmolov, 2011). The new format also has its own requirements for the virtual personality derived from its content and interactions: dynamic and constant expansion of Self-resources, evolution of methods of information consumption and growing publicity of the subject's inner world. The main factors of blogosphere development are the following: lack of content censorship; Netocracy development; implementation of core values of the contemporary participants in the mass communications – freedom and ease; mediatization of personality; politics and new media and socio-cultural phenomena (self-centricity, experience of identity crisis, self-diffuzziness, neo-narcissism), importance of virtual platform forming new social networks for personality content as self-resource and means of constructing identity (Asmolov & Asmolov, 2011). The above mentioned factors determine the relevance of studying blogosphere in the context of modifying citizens' political participation, mediatization of politics and personality, shifting the boundaries of the public and the private, functioning of virtual identity. The available research works in this field are devoted to: genre specifics of the blog, interpretation of the concept of blogosphere, correlation of blogs with traditional media and functions of the blog in political communication (Bazhenova & Ivanova, 2012; Herring, 2004); to the research of gatekeeping phenomenon, socio-linguistic, communicative and pragmatic characteristics and evolution of this genre (Mandolini, 2017; Steele, 2018).

In foreign linguistics (as opposed to Russian linguistics) a research tradition of linguistic study of «poster vandalism» as a practice of transgressive discourse has also begun to develop, inappropriate use of text type, the result of integration of different types of text (Luginbühl & Scarvaglieri, 2018; Michel & Pappert, 2018a, 2018b).

The analysis of existing works on protest communication indicates the need for its comprehensive research from the standpoint of an integrative approach (involving achievements in this field of linguistics, sociology, political science, cultural studies, media psychology), system-communicative, and comparative description.

6.2. Algorithm of integrative system-communicative comparative research of modern protest communication

The concept of the proposed study is based on the system-communicative consideration of protest (as a modern communication system formed in conditions of new media and communicative, social technologies with its own spatiotemporal, collective personal, substantive characteristics); on applying an integrative approach (which allows implement achievements in this field of sociology, political science, cultural studies, media psychology and linguistics, first of all, the theories of mass communication, speech influence, discursive linguistics, pragmalinguistics, stylistics and genre studies) and a comparative approach used to determine the general characteristics and linguistic socio-cultural specifics of protest communication (on the example of Russia and Germany); on refusal to interpret protest as an anomie phenomenon (which makes it impossible to describe protest communication with respect to the parameters of satisfaction). The modern information and communication space of protest functioning is characterized by the development of electronic democracy, which we considered as a form of public and political activity of citizens with using information and communication technologies for high-quality and operational interaction of people with each other, with authorities and other participants in the political process (what involves studying the specific characteristics of this space). We understand modern protest communication as proactive-reactive, non-institutionalized communication at the social level with a catalytic function, structurally coupled with a system of political communication; aimed at substituting thematization of a certain situation as threatening, at turning it into a social factor and appearing in its self-descriptions as solving a constructed problem; aimed at competing with other institutions in struggle for resources; characterized by system-communicative autonomy, its own spatiotemporal, collective personal, substantive characteristics, and extensive use of new media and technologies.

The algorithm meeting the concept includes the following research steps:

I. Study of system-communicative characteristic of protest (on the example of two countries – Russia and Germany):

1.A spatiotemporal characteristic correlating with prototypical forms and discursive practices characterized by genre specificity (for example, online petitions, political blogs, and political mobilization practices in social networks, Plakat-Busting) – study of differential genre features, the phenomenon of inter-genre integration and polymorphism.

2.The substantive characteristic of protest as a manifestation of reality is the analysis of thematization of objects in different protest practices, of the regularities of problem construction in different genres of protest communication.

3.Collective personal characteristic of protest: characterization of levels of interaction between authorities and citizens; relevant features of participants in protest communication practices, their values; definition of communicative strategies and tactics, relevant language means of influence, patterns of discursive construction of the identity of the addressee and the addresser; description of communicative aspects of solidarity in modern society of network structures.

II. Description of communicative practices from the standpoint of conflict sociology (satisfaction, соотнесение с моделью управления конфликтной ситуацией («принципиальные переговоры») correlation with the conflict management model («principled negotiations») of Roger Fisher and William Ury, based on the interpretation of conflict situations as an element of the norm and their negative

consequences as a communicative problem). The proposed model (in contrast to hard or soft model) comes from the fact that the involved partners (neither friends, nor enemies), their goal is reasonable, most effectively achieved result (neither an agreement nor win), and, for example, offers the following tenets of success: separating people from the problem (avoidance of transferring assessment of the effect on the addressee); focus on interests, not positions (openness and consideration for the interests of the other party); setting objective criteria; setting options (offering different solutions, considering alternative options, and making it easier for the other party to make decisions).

III. The study of manifestations in modern protest communication of mediatization of politics and personality, in particular, the phenomenon of Net-thinking: content personalization, public subjectivity, fractality of messages and tolerance to uncertainty (non-linearity, deviation from consistency / logic / objectivity), interactivity style, relevance / non-relevance of role differences and advantages, manifestations of neo-narcissism as a media and socio-cultural phenomenon (see comparison of Net-thinking, stipulated by the complexity of the Internet by type of chaos / randomness continuously spawn, intelligent information environment that causes spontaneous processes of self-organization that changes the psycho mass communication, a phenomenon of endophasy (Pronina, 2001), a reflection of the increasing compensatory, hedonistic, recreative needs of the public.

IV. Comparison of the research results obtained on the material of different linguistic and cultural communities (Russia and Germany), determination of general and linguistic socio-cultural characteristics of modern protest communication.

7. Conclusion

The relevance of the research problem is determined by the extreme social significance of the protest phenomenon itself, the need for its complex, interdisciplinary understanding in the context of the modern global information and communication space, namely, unexplored unobservable significant changes in the communication process, its subjects, and their collective interactions. The planned approaches and research directions for implementing modern research principles, such as anthropocentrism, expansionism, functionalism, explanatoriness, determine the complexity, polyparadigmality of research, make it possible to synthesize inter- and intra-disciplinary knowledge in the development of research methodology and implementation of research activities, and applied methodology is able to provide qualitatively new results in the field of system-communicative study of modern protest in the context of changing information and communication space. The proposed research activities will allow us to characterize the system-communicative characteristics of modern protest in Russia and Germany based on the material of different protest practices regarding changes in the information and communication space, regarding the parameters of satisfactoriness and dialectics of general and linguistic socio-cultural specific. Planned results of the study correlate with the achievements of the world level in this field of knowledge, answer the research principles of modern linguistics, significantly elaborate the theoretical and practical perspectives corresponding research paradigm, will contribute to further development of the provisions of communicative theory of protest, theories of modern social communication, online communication and further understanding of the communicative nature of social phenomena, links between technological and socio-cultural changes, the social and

political space; they can be used in the social sphere, performing illustrative and recommendation functions for government entities and specialists involved in the management of conflict societies, in particular, for regulating the protest behavior of the population, ensuring the optimization of communication in crisis or conflict situations.

Acknowledgments

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