LEXICAL STYLISTIC PECULIARITIES OF THE ANALYTICAL MEDIA TEXTS ABOUT INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND POLITICS

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Abstract. This study intends to evaluate characteristic features of a media text, its lexical stylistic devices and expressive means, based on the material from the journal about politics and international relations "Foreign Affairs". Discourse analysis discovers lexical thematic groups of vocabulary, evaluative vocabulary and their frequency. The methods exploited for the study are: content analysis, stylistic, semantic and analytical analysis methods. The results exhibit that thematic content of the journal exerts effect on the lexical stylistic characteristics of the media text. The journal's commitment to a well-educated reader and adherence to a corporate culture of the periodical determines the usage of metaphors, similes, allusions, phraseological units, etc.

Keywords: media communication, media stylistics, political discourse, media text, political linguistics, international relations.

1 Introduction

Mass communication is a socially important sphere of a societal speech practice where mass media perform as a middleman in the perception of a human of the surrounding world. The world of symbols and implicated images that mass media create must be perceived by a reader as an explicitly sensed and experienced reality. It is known that the objective of mass media is first of all to exert influence on the consciousness of the reader. And communication process may be considered successful if this aim is reached (Mardieva et al, 2015).

The peculiarity of mass media texts is their documentary character. At the same time reality reflected in a media text is not an objective reality. The author of a published material presents facts amid different factors. Worldview created by linguistic means is interpreted with respect to personal attitude and views of the author, political focus of the media that orders to write material (the so-called corporate culture of the media outlet). In this way mass media fulfill a certain social and political order In this sense, media text represents a peculiar view point on a political reality that applies for social relevance. At the same time analysis of political media texts helps to get authentic data about the state of societal consciousness, dominating paradigms on social and political issues relevant to the agenda (Minaeva et al, 2019: Dobrosklonskaja & Medialinguistics, 2008).

The significant forms of expressing ideological attitudes, social and political moods of the society in media texts arouse natural research interest. The topicality of this study is determined, on the one hand, by the interest that political discourse being able to influence society sparks among linguists, political analysts, specialists in the sphere of international relations, sociologists, psychologists and others, and, on the other hand, by the role of a definite political media outlet and its linguistic embodiment in forming political settings and public opinion. The absence of a complex study and representation of lexical stylistic peculiarities of one of the leading analytical media outlets of English political discourse of the present day have determined the scientific novelty of this work.

The theoretical framework of the study is based on scientific works performed by Russian and foreign scholars (Budaev E. V., Chudinov, 2011: Issers, 2016: Klushina & Mediastylistics, 2018: Shejgal, 2000: Chilton & Schäffner, 2002: Solganik, 2012: Dijk, 2002: Wodak, 2011: Busby, 2018).

Political discourse alongside a number of sub-discursive types encompasses media political sub-discourse that in reliance on a communicative act structure can be represented by a communicator, i.e. a collective professional informant of political language (in other words it is an editing group of journalists and authors-analysts), a recipient, i.e. as a rule mass nonprofessional political language agent; the situation is viewed as official and the type of communication is intermediated or indirect. The scope of such media political discourse is determined by a certain media of communication and thematic specificity of a media outlet (analytical articles devoted to a current situation, printed interviews and expert discussions).

On the one hand the language of mass media exhibits certain uniformity and cohesiveness that is determined by peculiarities of speech patterns in mass communication sphere, set types of forms and thematic structure, and on the other hand mass media texts demonstrate functional stylistic variety that reflects the universality of the themes covered, openness and versatility of a mass media text in the context of its ties with other spheres of speech usage. This particular duality, i.e. structural uniformity and functional stylistic variety make up an important peculiarity of mass media language that enables to determine it as a peculiar type of functional stylistic unities. The language of mass media is stylistically diverse, syncretical in the context of applying written and oral speech forms, it is characterised by stylistic convergence and non-specificity of stylistic outlines (Gimadeeva et al, 2019).

Different media outlets of social and political character cover official materials, write about a wide range of subjects on the issues of internal, external and world politics. Very often they are aimed at highly-educated readers, meanwhile media communication is realized in the frames of ideological, commercial and other goals of a media outlet itself.

2 Methods

As the object of its linguistic and stylistic research the study defined lexical and syntactic expressive means that function in the analytical articles of the American journal on international relations and external policy of the USA namely "Foreign Affairs". The choice of the media source is determined by high authority of this media outlet in the questions of covering global challenges of the present day and a full-fledged publication tradition of the journal that was founded in 1922. Political articles were collected from the journal issues published in 2018-2020 and are related to such topical world problems as countering terrorism, situation in the Middle East, geopolitical order of world powers, security of cyberspace, the impact of ecological problems on world economy and international relations and other. The methods of content analysis, stylistic, semantic and analytical analysis were exploited for studying lexical and stylistic richness.

3 Results and Discussion

Taking the example of the named media in this section we are going to study how the agenda is formed, i.e. how groups of topical political problems for wide audience are selected and what lexical and syntactic means are used in creation of the narrative that is capable of exerting influence on recipient's consciousness and forming assessment of political and social events represented in the journal.

So, for example, the article devoted to such phenomena as climate change starts with the enumeration of problems that carry a threat for a global order: "The world seems to be in a state of permanent crisis. The liberal international order is besieged from within and without. Democracy is in decline. A lackluster economic recovery has failed to significantly raise incomes for most people in the West. A rising China is threatening U.S. dominance, and resurgent international tensions are increasing the risk of a catastrophic war" (Devermont & Temin, 2019). The author of the article refers to such a stylistic device as gradation, using highly emotional vocabulary of

pejorative meaning, presenting the present state of affairs in an extremely negative light. Thus, a permanent crisis will inevitably lead to a disastrous war, democracy will decline, the recovery of a stagnant economy has not been successful, and the liberal world order is being besieged on all sides. Using language tools, the author creates a dark picture of the future and draws an image of an external enemy, increasing the tension in the potential reader.

In a broad sense, gradation is understood as a stylistic figure consisting of such an arrangement of parts of a statement (words, sentence segments), in which each contains an increasing (less often decreasing) semantic or emotional-expressive meaning, which creates an increase (less often weakening) of the impression they make. In our case, we are dealing with an example of contextual gradation. It occurs in a specific context and is based on words belonging to different lexical and thematic groups, but united by a common concept, namely, "difficult situation". The most obvious gradation elements are three lexical units: crisis – decline – war. The rest of the context environment affects the entire phrase, and the effect is enhanced by other verbal and substantive lexemes, such as besieged, threatened, failed, tensions, risk, as well as adjectives and prepositional phrases permanent, lackluster, resurgent, catastrophic, from within and without. All these lexical units contain negative components of semantics and can cause feelings of fear and tension in readers.

At the same time, the author touches on the concepts that characterize the most important components of a prosperous and peaceful existence that have developed in Western society: a liberal world order, democracy, economic stability, and the superiority of the United States. The author's depiction of a comprehensive danger that threatens American society and traditional values contributes to the desired effect of excitement and anxiety.

Due to the special content orientation of the media outlet, covering current problems of modern international relations, the journal articles are characterized by the presence of emotional and evaluative vocabulary, mainly of pejorative meaning (to implode, disordered, stagnant, destitute, grinding poverty, popular frustration, popular insurrections, to be convulsed by internal turmoil and poverty, barbaric and self-destructive leader, to be disillusioned, unprepossessing start, to confound expectations, etc.). For the named lexical group, the more frequent syntactic connection is the construction 'adjective' + 'noun'.

4 Thematic Sets of Lexical Units

As a result of the analysis of the material collected from "Foreign Affairs" journal articles, various thematic groups of lexical units were identified, namely, words and expressions denoting the opposition order-disorder, rivalry, demonstration of strength and power, war and conflict, position of priority and advantage, retreat and diplomatic relations.

Thus, the following lexical units can be classified as belonging to the order – disorder opposition: to stem the unrest, to generate new frustrations, to determine the rest, disordered, to dissolve, to exacerbate divisive consequences, popular insurrections, to be convulsed by internal turmoil and poverty, to quell the protests, to quell dissent, topple regime, protests unseated ten autocracies. Most of the presented units have a grammatical structure of V+N (verb + noun). Words within this lexical semantic group are linked by synonymy relations, while the internal semantic form of a number of verbal units refers to such areas as chemistry (to dissolve), biology (stem), physics (to generate), psychology (frustrations), mine-ware (to undermine), medicine (to be convulsed). The use of these lexemes in a political context contributes to the increment of meanings and serves to create expressiveness.

The thematic group "war and conflict" includes the following expressions: to devolve into civil war, upheaval, proxy conflicts, flash points, proxy struggles, to wage war with clean hands, atrocities, insurrections, to turn into a rout, to bloody an ally, to

be embroiled in civil war, an open-ended war, military coup, a clash with smb., to stumble into war, to be entrapped in a wider conflict, to push someone back to war, to deploy troops, major combat activity, a treacherous conflict of unknown scale and scope, etc. This group is the most numerous, obviously, due to the content orientation of the publication "Foreign Affairs".

Among the lexical units, one can also distinguish the thematic group "rivalry": rivalries, competitors, challengers, antiestablishment movements, internal contradictions, to confront the other as a peer, to make inroads into its opponent's turf, all-encompassing rivalry, intense economic competition, to fall at each other's throats, political betrayal, a comparable adversary. Most of the units in this group are lexical synonyms, that may occur as in literary as in colloquial functional styles; however, there are also units that are stylistically low-colloquial and even rude.

The group "strength and power" can be represented by the following lexical units: to power forward, an economic takeoff, to seize by force, to overturn apartheid, to harvest globalization's benefits, to turbocharge the process, global military domination, to project power in all directions, robust liberal democracy, integrated world, to project power abroad, to gain the upper hand, displacement, grip on power, to strengthen the grip of authoritarian regimes. This group is characterized by the presence of phraseological units, as well as a number of expressions built on the basis of metaphorical transfer.

A relatively small group consists of the words of the thematic group "priority and advantage": to leap at the opportunity, to garner support, to gain the upper hand, authoritarian competitors gain ground, to move onward and upward. These expressions can be attributed to set-phrases, mainly of colloquial speech style.

To the group "diplomatic relations" belong the following lexical units: to foster good relations with, to negotiate a peace deal, to get (to demand) a seat at the table, to compromise, to negotiate a settlement, to ban negotiations, all to no avail, to miss best opportunity to find peace, overture, engaging in negotiations, to work towards a comprehensive cease-fire, over the course of nine rounds of talks, to develop a draft agreement, to meet conditions, to call off the negotiations, a clean break. This group consists of words that characterize positive diplomatic relations, as well as negative and neutral ones, or their absence.

Due to the fact that the articles of the journal "Foreign Affairs" quite often cover the issues of military actions, we have identified a small lexical group "retreat": to lay down the arms, to stage a comeback, a reduction in the strikes, withdrawal policy, a drawdown, a hint of retreat, to throw in the towel. Negative semantic orientation is achieved due to the internal form of lexical units, namely the presence of the negative semantics prefix re- or composite components like down, back in compound words.

The media industry, describing certain political and social events, often creates a particular image of reality, whether an outlook on the problem, personality of a politician, or a state leader, the image of the country, which is then presented to a mass audience. A picture or portrait created in this way can have an expressive effect on the reader, on his feelings and mind, forming a representation of the world in his mind, which often has little to do with reality. In this case, the socio-political orientation of the media has a special influence on the content and form of the media text, and the task is to keep the reader's attention. Therefore, the authors of articles often resort to metaphorical transformations, vivid comparisons, and use expressive vocabulary.

The authors of analytical articles of the journal "Foreign Affairs "often refer to the description of political regimes of a particular country, using various language tools to create a bright and memorable image. So, China is called the country of a cruel and corrupt authoritarian regime (thuggish and corrupt authoritarian regime), Russia – the country of a bandit kleptocracy (regime of gangster kleptocracy), Eritrea – the sworn enemy of Ethiopia

(Ethiopia's archenemy, Eritrea; where the word archenemy etymologically ascends to the name of the devil, i.e. originally especially Satan). Chinese statesman and politician Mao Zedong is named by "Foreign Affairs" journal as one of the most barbaric and self-destructive leaders in history. South Africa is represented as a country that has the potential to become a catalyst of growth in the entire African region (South Africa – an engine of growth for the whole region), and the Congo – a country whose economy has been on the verge of collapse for a long time (Congo – a long-standing basket case). It is interesting to note that etymologically the expression basket case goes back to the time of the World War I and denoted hopelessly wounded, and over time in a figurative sense came to mean a difficult situation, economic and financial (Cowie, 2009).

5 Expressive Means Of Creating Perlocutionary Effect

"Foreign Affairs" journal is aimed at readers interested in international relations and world politics, and the authors of articles always appeal to the fund of general knowledge and count on a certain intellectual level of the recipient. In this regard, media texts often use metaphorical reinterpretation of well-known concepts, appeal to allusions, resources of phraseology, including contextual transformations, periphrases in order to influence the readership and promote an unrecognized opinion. At the same time, stylistic tropes perform a heuristic function in the media text, serve as a means of understanding the constantly changing political reality and formulating new political programs, and serve as an argumentative function, serving as a means of persuading the audience.

So, in the article "Which World We Are Living in?", dedicated to the geopolitical alignment of the great powers, the author refers to such stylistic device as allusion, describing the opposition movements: "And in the decade following, antiestablishment movements have grown like Topsy" (Malley & Finer, 2018). Referring to the popular novel of the 19th century by American writer Harriet Beecher Stowe "Uncle Tom's Cabin" (1852), the author of the article mentions the young character – a slave girl Topsy, who said that she "just took and grew up". The expression to grow like Topsy started to mean a rapid and often uncontrolled growth: to grow very quickly, especially in an unplanned or uncontrolled way. The expression 'just growed (like Topsy)' in Oxford dictionary of English idioms is interpreted as follows: (saying) a person, institution, custom etc. has come into existence nobody knows when and how (McGregor, 2019).

In the same article, the author uses metaphorical transfer, calling Taiwan a 'thriving Asian tiger', i.e. a prosperous Asian tiger. And continuing this theme, emphasizing the attractiveness of Taiwan for China, the author poses a question: "Will an increasing powerful Beijing stand by and watch its long-sought prize slip away?". The relationship between China and Taiwan from the point of view of the latter is shown by the following example: "Taiwan, a self-governing island for decades, fears it will be gobbled up by the mainland". The country's fears of being influenced by mainland China and losing its autonomy are expressed by the verbal metaphor of gobbled up (i.e. to eat something very fast, in a way that people consider rude or greedy; or if we speak about business and politics that means to take control of smth (Kendall-Taylor et al, 2020: Gimadeeva et al, 2019: Smyslova, 2019).

A number of interesting author's linguistic solutions are the following examples: a "cyber – Pearl Harbor" – an extensive digital attack that can paralyze critical infrastructure, China's Great Firewall – a Golden Shield or great firewall that monitors what users read on the Internet (similar to the Great Wall of China), "halal net" – a system of restricted Internet access in Iran.

"As a protest movement heated up in Hong Kong last summer, for example, the Chinese regime simply strengthened its "Great Firewall", removing subversive content from the Internet in mainland China almost instantaneously" (Case & Deaton, 2020).

Using this lexical combination, the author of the article relies on the reader's background knowledge, thus creating a common communication platform (Tushev et al, 2019).

The author's allusion to well-known literary, in our case mythological, characters is presented in the following examples: some fundamentally new chimera – some brand-new pipe dream (fantasy), only a few Cassandras pointed out that culture was more powerful – only a few prophets pointed to the fact that culture is more influential; the combination of the historical image of a gladiator and slang demonstrates the following example: For today's gladiators to buck the odds and avoid falling at each other's throats like most of their predecessors did, how ever, four things will be necessary (Ilikova, 2019).

Political hyperbole is typical of the following example, where we can see the likening of two cognitively distant (not directly related) concepts, namely, unreasonably high costs and the disease cancer: This wasteful spending on health care is a cancer that has metastasized throughout the economy (Bullough, 2020). The article refers to the reduction of interest deductions for the health care system. The hyperbolized meaning is expressed in the form of an extended metaphor, the intensity of which is enhanced by the lexeme metastasized, formed by the conversion from the noun metastasis – the development of tumours in different parts of the body resulting from cancer that has started in another part of the body; one of these tumours.

In an article on the problem of corruption, namely the impact it has on the modern world order, this phenomenon is also compared to the disease cancer: In a speech he delivered in 1996, James Wolfensohn, then president of the World Bank, likened corruption to cancer. "Corruption diverts resources from the poor to the rich, increases the cost of running businesses, distorts public expenditures, and deters foreign investors," Wolfensohn explained (Coronel, 2019). The author uses the stylistic device of intertextuality in the form of direct quoting the head of the World Bank, increasing the credibility of the views expressed, creating the effect of documentation and reliability; thus a striking comparison is obviously taken out of context, and the reader only needs to guess whether the phrase is the original statement created by the expert, or is a more general conclusion of the author of the article. In any case, the author manages to reach the effect of influence, because such a comparison comes to the fore.

Both of these examples demonstrate how by exaggerating the problem (in our case, expenditures and corruption), the effect of importance and focusing the reader's attention on certain issues is achieved.

Emphasizing a negative sign and creating a negative image is typical of the following example, where the metaphor Red peril (red threat, danger) is used to nominate adherents of the Communist party in the Republic of the Philippines: These anticommunist vigilantes were egged on by incendiary radio broadcasts hyping the Red peril. In the same article, the author calls them recalcitrant Reds (disobedient, uncooperative Reds). The purpose of the statement is to create a perception of the object as suspicious and undesirable, to qualify it so as to cause dislike, disgust or hatred (Lynch, 2018).

In order to enhance the expressive color of the journalistic text, the authors of articles often turn to phraseology.

The United Arab Emirates took a back seat in Syria (Malkasian, 2020). (To take a back seat – to take a less prominent role in some situation).

At times, however, evidence of failure was purposefully swept under the rug (To sweep under the rug – to ignore, deny, or conceal from public view or knowledge something that is embarrassing, unappealing, or damaging to one's reputation).

At the same time, the roiling U.S. confrontation with Iran is a wild card that could alter nature of the Afghan war, including by re-entrenching the American presence. (A wild card – someone or something that is unpredictable).

In the near term, rapid technological change will likely produce a cat-and-mouse dynamic as citizens and governments race to gain the upper hand (A cat-and-mouse – informal a phrase used to describe the suspenseful relationship between one being pursued and the pursuer; keep somebody in a state of uncertainty, being sometimes kind, sometimes cruel); to gain the upper hand – to come to be in a position of advantage, power, and/or control over someone, something, or some situation).

The following are other examples of using phraseological units: to hold sway, i.e. to have power, control or great influence over somebody/something, to stem the tide, i.e. to stop something from continuing or worsening, off the table, i.e. to be withdrawn or no longer available, as for consideration, acceptance, discussion, etc., to toy with, i.e. to consider or think about an idea or plan, to rock the boat, i.e. to do or say something that might endanger a stable situation or upset the status quo, to clip wings, i.e. to restrict one's freedom, power, or full potential, a high-wire act, i.e. an especially risky or treacherous job, plan, action, or operation, alludes to an aerialist performance on a tightrope, to test waters, i.e. to try to get an idea of what something will be like before actually doing it. These phraseological units characterize the sphere of politics as an area where there are such concepts as rivalry, power struggle, instability and high risk.

The introduction of contextually transformed phraseological units into the text of a journal article allows to play on stable expressions, discover new meanings, convey additional information, and evoke new associations and emotions in the reader. Such creative processing of phraseological units gives them a new expressive color and increases their expressiveness. The method of replacing a component is typical for the following examples:

Australia happens to be smack in the path of China's expansion.

Smack in the eye – set phrase used to describe words or actions that have offended or otherwise upset someone (Flournoy & Sulmeyer, 2018).

Hack-by-hack approach – i.e. attack for attack when speaking of cyber attacks on the Internet; the phrase is formed by analogy with the well-known expressions eye for eye, tooth for tooth.

Facing for greater constraints, Obama had to play the cards he had been dealt (to play one's cards well – to act adeptly and with good judgment; to make the best and most effective use of the resources at one's disposal). Substitution and concretization of the meaning are typical for this sentence.

The change in the usual scope of the expression "rules of the road", i.e. traffic rules is influenced by the general context of the article devoted to security measures on the Internet. According to the author of the article, now this expression should be understood as 'norms of conduct in cyberspace during peacetime' (Flusberg et al, 2018).

In a slightly different meaning, this expression appears in the next sentence, where rules of the road refers to a set of established rules aimed at avoiding a conflict or unpleasant situation: The United States will also need to work closely with like-minded allies and partners to set and enforce the rules of the road, including by restoring U.S. leadership in multilateral institutions such as the United Nations.

The special organization of syntax in political articles also contributes to the creation of expressiveness and reflection of the problematic diverse nature of the subject matter. Thus, the journal "Foreign Affairs" is characterized by the presence of parallel constructions, in particular, antitheses, gradations, etc. Interrogative sentences also emphasize the ambiguous nature of the phenomenon under study, and make the reader search for answers to the tasks set.

The use of contextual antonyms helps to reveal the contradictory nature of objects and phenomena, to express contrast and show the completeness of the coverage of phenomena, as well as to give a bright expression, to strengthen the emotionality of speech.

Given the high costs and slim benefits of the war, why hasn't the United States simply left Afghanistan?

The intensifying digital repression in countries such as China offers a bleak vision of ever-expanding state control and ever-shrinking individual liberty.

Worried about rocking the boat in a seemingly fragile region, it (the USA) has supported trusted but flawed partners instead of pushing leaders to make real change (Kotkin, 2018).

And although the United States has brought the Sunni Gulf States into increasingly open alignment with Israel, this effort has been undermined by the Emirati and Saudi clash with Qatar.

6 Conclusion

The analyzed material allowed us to draw the following conclusions.

1. Media texts presented in the journal "Foreign Affairs" perform the function of informing, influencing, and aimed at manipulating the minds of readers.
2. Content analysis of the analytical articles allows us to identify the following thematic groups of lexical units: competition, demonstration of power and authority, opposition order / disorder, strength and power, priority and advantage, diplomatic relations, retreat, war and conflict (is the most numerous). Coverage of topical issues in international relations determines the presence of emotional and evaluative vocabulary of primarily pejorative meaning.
3. On the content and stylistic levels presenting information in media text plays a big role, namely: coverage of principal materials (events, problems, personalities) selected by editorial staff is presented under a certain analytic view, i.e. we can see the impact of corporate ethics on the content of the articles. Thus, we can say that "Foreign Affairs" articles combine materials of an oppositional, complimentary and neutral (often veiled) nature, reflecting the current geopolitical situation. In this way the building of media reality is formed that can use media interpretation of events to shape public opinion, influence the course of political life, exert ideological influence, and create the image of political figures and countries.
4. Orientation to the educated reader determines the widespread use of metaphorical reinterpretation of well-known concepts (especially in naming countries or events), allusions based on images from literature and mythology, often original and non-trivial, intertextuality techniques in the form of various types of citation, which gives the text a bright dialogic character and increases the authority and reliability of the events described.
5. Lexical-semantic and syntactic stylistic devices play an important role in influencing the reader. The most commonly used in the journal "Foreign Affairs" are contextual antonyms, antithesis techniques, gradation, for the purpose of expressing contrast and giving expression; phraseological units, including contextually transformed ones, which all contribute to the creation of new associations and increase the expressiveness of the media text.
6. Identification of the influencing potential of stylistically colored vocabulary and the special organization of syntax determine the theoretical and practical significance of the study. As a perspective for further study, we can outline the typology of metaphors, allusions, and euphemisms, including in a comparative aspect based on media texts in other languages, as well as the features of their translation.

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