VIRTUAL DISCOURSE AS A COMMUNICATIVE REQUIREMENT OF THE MODERN ERA

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Abstract: The article is dedicated to virtual discourse, which becomes as a new stage of modern communication. Since the approaches to virtual discourse in the literature of theoretical linguistics are ambiguous, the researches conducted on this topic stand out for their special relevance in the field of modern linguistics. In the article, for the first time, strategies and manipulation issues in virtual communication are illuminated from a theoretical point of view, which can serve as a basis for empirical research in the future. During this study, the descriptive-comparative method of special linguistics was used, and empirical analyzes were conducted. The obtained results are reflected in the form of provisions at the end of the article. According to the author's conclusion, within one of his results, it is stated that manipulative methods are used to achieve different goals, such as the implementation of a manipulative strategy, in interpersonal discussion and media discourse carried out over virtual discourse.

Keywords: virtual discourse; communicative strategy; manipulation; interpersonal discussion; virtual communication; linguistics.

1 Introduction

"Discourse, as a form of social behavior, plays the role of a tool in the formation of the social and science world. In addition, it has a leading role in the formation of social relations" [1, p.34-37]. This is possible because of the discourse and the changes in society, people's views and steps are determined, creating a field of hidden and obvious meanings. From this point of view, virtual discourse is the most widespread type of discourse in the modern world, and the one with which every person is connected to one degree or another. Because of it virtual discourse is of particular interest.

A large part of the participants of the virtual discourse are people from all age categories of the society without strict social restrictions. On the one hand, this is the most democratic and open type of discourse. Therefore, people from all layers can participate in the Internet discourse, regardless of their social status, education, world view or age. The only condition to be a participant in this discourse is to be able to use a computer with access to the Internet, other information technologies and gadgets.

But on the other hand, virtual discourse also creates certain barriers and obstacles for users: having the necessary level of technical training, developing the ability to move in cyberspace, mastering "computer jargon" [13], knowing at least one foreign language are indispensable conditions for a virtual discourse user.

In this regard, the main task facing this research is to consider the virtual discourse as a modern communicative tool, to examine its characteristics, as well as to illuminate the manipulative aspects of virtual communication.

2 Materials and Method

In order to implement the tasks during the research, the descriptive theoretical-comparative method was used, and the scientific sources related to the topic were addressed as a theoretical basis. The results of the author's observations in the virtual space were used as the research materials.

3 Results

Communicative form in virtual discourse

In Azerbaijani linguistics, virtual discourse is also called internet discourse: "Virtual communication is based on virtual text (discourse). This text is loaded with virtual reality in a communication situation and acts as a special model of reality. Virtual discourse appears on the basis of information technologies and is realized on the basis of the interaction of communication images" [8, p.23]. Sociolinguistics considers all texts used during Internet communication as virtual discourse. In some sources, this is also called computer discourse. However, from the terminological point of view, we are in favor of naming it as a virtual discourse.

As it is mentioned, in virtual discourse, as in other types of discourse, there are two interacting parties (in this case: agent – client) who communicate with each other. In some types of virtual discourse, there is a certain equality of participants. This includes chats, conferences, e-mail. In other cases, equality is observed between the parties. As in mass media, in virtual discourse and in most cases, the agent (transmitting information, disseminating information) distributes any information and uses this information, hiding a part of it, in order to form a certain effect on the client (receiver and reader of information in the Internet space), presenting it in the way and form he/she wants. He/she uses various methods, the most common form of which is "the disinformation method" [4; 14]. Acting in the role of a manipulator (manager), the agent can form an opinion about the event that happened in the client in accordance with his/her own opinion.

The lack of censorship, a special system for purifying the information applied in the virtual discourse, has a positive effect on the process of transmitting information about the event, but it has many negative aspects, too. On the one hand, the lack of censorship makes virtual discourse very attractive as a source of information. Therefore, it is up to the user to read the various opinions and considerations that are freely expressed along with the official sources about the same event, and to interpret the information from this perspective. On the other hand, the lack of censorship makes the information received less reliable in terms of accuracy or precision. The absence of censorship, anonymity leads to the fact that the relationships within the network become more complicated, their management is almost impossible. In this case, there are favorable conditions for controlling and manipulating the thinking and consciousness of users. As a rule, the party receiving the information is unaware of the nature of the information. For this reason, he does not have the opportunity to distinguish right from wrong. On the other hand, those who transmit information use it for their own interests and place only the information that represents their interests on their web pages. "Listeners or readers who do not read political documents and are not familiar with the original version of speeches, receive politics information in the form of a ready-made product through mass media: politics is presented as a collection of plots" [13, p.14].

When this opinion of the researcher is expressed more clearly, it turns out that the information field that surrounds the common man consists of a collection of subjects, abstract paintings, which hinders him from seeing the reality.

One of the main features of virtual discourse is that it has a dialogic form. Thus, "the mutual exchange between the addressee and the addresser forms the basis of this discourse, and the addressee has the certain base of knowledge of addresser's logic, position and other things" [11, p. 187].

One of the different aspects of virtual discourse compared to mass media is its interactivity. Each user has the opportunity to write and send own comment to the article, information, forum, etc.

The chronotope of virtual discourse[1] can have the most diverse options. This is due to the fact that the Internet gives its users the opportunity to receive information at a convenient place and time. Also, the choice of area to obtain information is given to the user.

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[1] NOTE: Uniformity of time and space dimensions aimed at the expression of a certain meaning. This term was first used in the field of psychology by Ukhtomsky in the 20th century. Later, thanks to Bakhtin's works, it began to be used in the literature and aesthetics.

The main purpose of virtual discourse is also ambiguous. These goals range from the elementary level (it creates conditions for people simply to communicate) to the most complex level (refers to creating an overall picture of the surrounding reality or a parallel virtual world). However, on the basis of the conducted public survey, it turns out that the main and most important goal of the virtual discourse is the exchange of information and the formation of a general picture of the surrounding reality. Agents' and clients' personal goals may not coincide, as the client's main goal is to receive objective information, but in most cases this does not coincide with the agents' meaning.

Basic values of virtual discourse

The main values of virtual discourse are presented in its main concepts, information and communication. Depending on the types of virtual discourse, the functions are also different. But among them, informative and representative functions are established in the front position. Considering the severe competition in the information market, we can see that the representative function is more important than these two functions. Namely for this reason, the titles of informational texts should be more attractive and colorful.

In this case, the manipulation is based on the stereotypy of understanding and "short-cut". "Short-cut" means "shortcut for launching the program", "shortest way", "the most economical or reasonable (rational) way to achieve something", "stereotype". According to psychologists, actual stereotyping, automatic behavior is more prevalent [2]. Therefore, in most cases, this is more appropriate, and in some cases, it is considered the most necessary tool due to its effectiveness and economy.

Information sites not only have representational and informational functions, but also have a special effect on the formation of communication between people, their worldview and their attitudes to one or another issue. Therefore, it can be said that "the virtual discourse also performs an function of effect. This is reflected to one degree or another in its attractive, persuasive, and suggestive functions" [16, p, 20].

Any information presented on websites goes through a special selection process, that is, we read information about events that have already been selected, refined and presented from a point of view suitable for certain purposes, only for us, or rather for us. Authors who post information on websites often present information from a personal point of view. In addition, in some genres, for example, in analytical comments or essays, expressing an emotional attitude to the subject of information is one of the main features of these genres. Against this background, of course, it is appropriate to talk about the manipulative and mystifying functions of virtual discourse. Thus, any statement appropriately presented in this field can be used as a means of manipulation and mystification aimed at both individuals and the masses, having a speculative tone.

Considering that Internet communication has different forms, it is necessary to distinguish two types of addressees in manipulative discourse: opponent and mass addressee. As a rule, news sites are aimed at a mass audience. However, it is necessary to take into account the communicative needs of each client who makes up this group even when transferring information intended for the mass addressee.

Information exchange is in the foreground for chat and e-mail correspondence. Therefore, at this point, in addition to the above-mentioned functions, another function of virtual discourse — the communicative function - emerges.

The basic material for this type of discourse is information in a broad sense - that is, information of all kinds of news such as politics, economy, business, finance, sports, stock exchange, culture news constitutes the main body of the virtual discourse. Considering the possibilities of multimedia, "online" journalism can be called a small form of journalism. The material presented here is organized in the form of small blocks and classified on the basis of special divisions according to the theme. Graphical tools facilitate orientation in cyberspace, enliven text on the one hand, and direct users' attention to specific points on the other hand.

Communicative strategies of virtual discourse

Various strategies are also inherent in virtual discourse. It is possible to define them according to the main goals of this discourse, which include: obtaining information; analyzing the obtained information, that is, determining how and when to present this information; preparing a block of information about the obtained information; depending on the type of clients, providing information in an appropriate manner (individually or with the advice of experts); forming a certain attitude to the happening event. When talking about the strategies typical for news sites in virtual discourse, it is necessary to mention the following: shaping the emotional mood of the addressee, persuasion, explaining information, manipulation and mystification strategies.

The main strategy of virtual discourse is the organization. In order to properly implement this strategy, the agent must have self-confidence, believe in the truth and irrefutability of the information he/she presents, have the ability to convey a large amount of information with several phrases, and on the other hand, must be able to present one phrase in a semantically complete manner.

Although the parties gain a certain level of equality in chat and e-mail correspondence, it is quite appropriate to talk about the intention to arouse interest in the relationship. So, the status equality observed in this form of communication is relative. In fact, the party who is more inclined to communicate rationally resorts to the strategy of manipulation, mystification, and other means within own interests.

The genres observed in virtual discourse can be defined depending on the forms of communication. The main feature is that the genres have a dual form. For example: oral (conferences and forums) and written (news sites); dialogic (conferences, chats and forums) and monologic (articles, news releases, etc.); public (targeted to a mass audience (news sites, forums, conferences)) and non-public (e-mail and chats).

Virtual discourse, like many other types of discourse, has a high level of intertextuality, which is based on quoted texts and their concepts that are frequently used in virtual discourse. This feature is one of the systematizing principles of virtual discourse. Intertextual connections presented in the form of quotations can serve many different functions.

When talking about virtual discourse, it is necessary to touch on the issue of discursive formulas. Under the term discursive formulas, V.I.Karasik mentions the uniqueness of the speech figures that form the communication characteristic of the relevant public institution [9]. These discursive formulas, in addition to being general, also have different characteristics among them, on the basis of which the information received from different mass media can be distinguished. The main principle of Internet broadcasting is to meet the individual interests of the user. Unlike traditional mass media, Internet broadcasting has a number of distinctive characteristics, which can be grouped as follows:

- Economic features (requiring less financial resources and time, a large number of internet channels, etc.)
- Technical advantages (having the opportunity to watch several Internet channels at the same time; individual selection of the video's sequence, screen scale, having the ability to archive print and video materials, the ability to expand the information space, interactive education and organizations at Internet conferences; working in real time; simultaneous implementation of several broadcasts from within the same event, etc.) [5, p.127; 7, p.176-178].
- Psychological characteristics: avoidance of untypical behavior, anonymity of contacts, voluntariness, absence of

non-verbal information. These create difficulties in the emotional expression of the communication component. However, it is not correct to claim the complete absence of the emotional component at this point. In all areas where there is a human factor, the emotional component is present to one degree or another.

The absence of the physical body in the Internet space removes many psychological limitations. In connection with this point, researchers note a new special type of identity: virtual identity [12, p.192]. Y.M. Jafarov notes in one of his studies that the virtual personality is, in fact, a human mask. A person entering virtual communication creates his own mask with the help of various tools, and this mask forms the main characteristics of the virtual personality [8, p.20]. In addition, communication in the Internet has its own rules. In this regard, the special computer lexicon created in recent decades "acts as a means of self-expression of the participants of communication and leads to the strengthening of corporate unity" [3, p.22].

On the other hand, the researchers argue that life in cyberspace is an individualized experience. Constant communication on the Internet leads to the isolation of the personality from the real world. In connection with this point, the psychologists rightly point out that communication and regular work over the Internet is, in fact, an anti-social activity. On the one hand, the Internet creates wider opportunities for communication, and on the other hand, communication takes a simpler form, which once again proves its negative effect on the newly emerging colloquial lexicon.

In either approach, virtual discourse exhibits a double standard. For example, on the one hand, it is possible to talk about the widespread democratization of ideas [6, p.4], on the other hand, it is possible to talk about the growth of a new generation that only learns spoken language under the influence of virtual discourse [16, p.17]. Even graphic signs (smilies) expressing emotions have lost their main purpose and are used to express emotional content in accordance with the corresponding facial expressions they manifest [13]. This gives many researchers reason to think that in the new generation formed on the basis of virtual communication, there is a return to children's discourse based on iconic images. In addition, O.A. Leontovich rightly notes that changes are taking place in the cultural language system of the "virtual personality" [12]. The user who tries to adapt to an unfamiliar and often foreign language space loses his individuality (especially the cultural language system).

4 Conclusion

From this small study, it can be concluded that all types of text placed on the Internet and open to users form the core of virtual discourse.

Virtual discourse shows a double standard at all points: on the one hand, it opens unobstructed horizons in the direction of knowledge in the human mass, on the other hand, it leads to the isolation of people from reality, thus, non-verbal communication gains dominance in society.

The main function and strategy of Internet discourse is manipulative and has the ability to shape the worldview of users in any direction.

According to the two-stage communication theory, information first spreads to opinion leaders and then to the rest of the population. A more accurate study of these processes has led to the emergence of a multi-stage theory of communication, where there is no such clear division into two classes and the influence flows in all directions.

Virtual discourse is characterized by different levels of communication and the potential for individual influence that ensure success in communicating with other people. It includes the following characteristics: comfort and communication skills, adaptability, confidence, an active position in interaction, achievement motivation, affiliation, understanding of the

interlocutor and social intelligence. It is also worth noting the qualities of the media as opinion leaders, such as trust and credit. It is those that allow the media to effectively pass through the protection mechanisms of data recipients.

A person becomes a potentially vulnerable object of information manipulation by the media. Due to the fact that in the 21st century, the information space and information pressure on humanity is in the stage of excessive change, the discussion taking place in the mass media has a great impact on the public consciousness. Most of the ideas and knowledge about the world are formed in a person under the influence of mass media such as television, radio, press, and the Internet. The main psychological task of the texts of this type of discourse is to draw attention to it, optimize its perception and perceive the content as an address. In interpersonal discussion and media discourse, manipulative techniques are used to achieve various goals, such as implementing a manipulative strategy.

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