

## Institutional, Stereotypical and Mythological Media Markers of Modern Society

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**The socio-economic and political situation in society creates certain conditions for successful or unsuccessful media communication. Mass media influence on socio-economic and political country life. Media discourse reflects socio-economic and cultural relations in the state and between the states, defines interests of modern society. This article discusses some unresolved issues of the discourse and influence theories, namely establishment of institutional, stereotypical and mythological media markers of modern society. External and internal institutional media communication types are allocated. Mass media institutionality correlates with the leading pragmatical principle of interest and the oracle as a prognostic message based on stereotypes and myths, creating different images.**

**Key words:** Institution, Stereotype, Myth, Image, Media discourse, Media markers, Society.

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At the turn of the XX – XXI centuries we observe the escalation of global socio-political situation, its active coverage in local and international mass media and, as a result, increase of native speakers' interest from various linguocultures. The modern linguistics lifts a problem of interaction between the addresser and the addressee, between the discourse and the power, tries to answer questions of a language role in continuous struggle for people's power and influence, including mass media language. It is explained by social and psychological factors. The socio-economic and political situation in the state creates certain conditions for successful or unsuccessful media communication. In turn, the media discourse and being realized in it political,

religious and other types of discourse have impact on socio-economic and political life of the state. The media discourse reflects the socio-economic and cultural relations in the state and between the states, defines interests of modern society. Efficiency of media communication consists in formation of the ideological (political, religious, consumer, creative, etc.) majority, achievement of a public consensus. Text linguistics (in particular, discursive, socio-, psycho-, media linguistics) is one of the most heavily developed areas in modern linguistics. The undertaken research meets needs of the pragmatical and cognitive linguistic areas for discourse description experience (Searle, 1983; Cialdini, 2000; Krasavsky, 2001; Pratkanis and Aronson, 2001; Fiske *et al.*, 2002; Zheltukhina, 2003; 2011; Chudinov, 2008; Karasik, 2010; Dobronichenko *et al.*, 2012, etc.). This article discusses some unresolved questions of the discourse and influence theories, namely establishment of institutional, stereotypical and mythological media markers of modern society.

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## METHOD

The aim of the present study identified the choice of analysis methods. In the paper such research procedures, as hypothetical deductive, inductive, descriptive methods, elements of cognitive interpretation, content analysis to identify the substantive aspect of media texts; the discourse analysis, studying structure and units of discourse, the main of which is the speech act, as well as a comprehensive approach to the analysis of media texts by analogy with F. Burkhardt's approach to the analysis of political texts (Burkhardt, 1988), consisting in studying of their semantics, pragmatics, syntactics by component, contextual and stylistic analysis are used. The methodological basis of the research is the system approach including cognitive, linguistic, pragmatical, communicative, rhetorical, linguocultural, descriptive, critical subapproaches. According to system approach any phenomenon is considered as integrity in unity of all its connections and relations. At media markers research of modern society it is important to proceed from methodological regulations on language and speech differentiation, on language as a cultural and historical environment, on relationship between rational and emotional in thinking, on language as an instrument of social power and influence.

## RESULTS

Media discourse belongs to an institutional communication type which is carrying out at institutes in which communication acts as a component of their organization, which is based on certain social rules and functioning ritualization. Degree of communication ritualization depends on such factors, as degree of acquaintance, degree of communication situation officiality, communication form's prestigiousness, communicants' social status, etc. (Bogdanov, 1987, p. 11). The difficult system of media institutes expressed in various forms (*publishing houses, TV, radio companies*, etc., regulating distribution of political and other proposals; *groups, unions, blocks, labor unions*, etc., developing offers; *mixed forms* – imposing of institutes at each other), generates various institutional language actions, gives peculiar

features to institutional, social communication. The institutional communication classification offered by V. Dieckmann (Dieckmann, 1981, p. 217-243) we will transfer to the media sphere. As a result we will receive such types of media communication, as *external* (between media institute and the citizen) and *internal* media communication (between agents at media institutes). In both aspects manifestation of influence, suggestiveness is found: in the journalist speech from media institute and within media institute.

The problem of semantic uncertainty (ambiguity, *Ambiguität*) of policy language, mass media language, making impact on the addressee, is considered by many linguists and political scientists. Media discourse semantic uncertainty is caused by semantic and pragmatical factors. Semantic factors include:

- 1) Abstractness and latitude values: abstract words without clarifying definitions (democracy instead of parliamentary democracy, process, phenomenon, mission, freedom, justice, etc.) owing to its referential uncertainty differ interpretation latitude;
- 2) Meaning complexity caused by denotation complexity: designation of ideas complexes remote from a first-hand person experience, caused by complexity of extra language reality (default, impeachment);
- 3) Semantic boundaries blurring of gradual semantics words: lack of accurate distinctions in designation of socio-political reference points on a scale: reactionary – conservative – liberal – progressive – radical;
- 4) Designation relativity or ideological polysemy: use of the same words by carriers of different ideologies to indicate different concepts (Dieckmann, 1981, p. 56), i.e. dependence on the nomination choice of the speaker position (the same idea – reactionary and liberal).

The community of estimates from group positions (Edelman, 1964, p. 115), characteristic for media discourse, testifies to domination of an affective-evaluative component over the informative component. Further we will open pragmatical factors of uncertainty of mass media language:

- 1) *motivation, influence*: assigning language

symbols and determining their content, provoking desirable addressee reaction (21 Green, 1987, p. 2);

- 2) *manipulation*: such strategies are based on uncertainty, as a) veiling (obscuring of undesirable information), b) mystification (truth concealment, conscious deception), c) depersonalization (anonymity, responsibility removal) (Sheigal, 2000);
- 3) *face saving*: use of abstract or uncertain expressions hides ignorance, incompetence of the addresser and if necessary allows to deny the told as it is impossible to accuse of lie of the one who told nothing (Crystal, 1995, p. 378);
- 4) *non-conflict communication*: fair, neutral position by uncertainty creating when discussing of controversial questions promotes care manifestation, contradictions smoothing between communicants as the addresser is ready to offer clarity of understanding to strengthen confidence and win sympathies of the addressee (Hamilton and Mineo, 1998, p. 6);
- 5) *lack of actions control*: contextual concepts uncertainty in programs, performances texts complicates efficiency of control over the implementation of the taken obligations, allows the addresser to maneuver, to subordinate his actions to moral standards of situational ethics (Klyucharev, 1995, p. 214).

Institutionality of media communication promotes realization of an inexact reference as semiotics mechanism of semantic uncertainty. The following types of referential deviation are allocated:

- 1) *broad reference character* – the word ratio with excessively wide range of referents;
- 2) *abstract reference character* – the word ratio with the abstract referent;
- 3) *ambiguous reference character* – the word ratio with the referent differently treated;
- 4) *unknown reference character* – the word ratio with the unknown referent;
- 5) *alien reference character* – the word ratio with “foreign” referent; 6) *nonexistent reference character* – the word ratio with the nonexistent referent (Klyuev, 1996, p. 215).

Factual material confirms the findings of E. Sheigal (Sheigal, 2000) that the first three types

of referential deviation correlated with semantic sense of uncertainty factors. Focus on non-existent or “foreign” referent, self-reference character (Baudrillard, 1981) explain sign phantom, existence of lexical phantoms as words without denotatum, a real subject of designation (Norman, 1994). Connection with the unknown referent indicates esoteric sign character (Sheigal, 2000). Media discourse phantom consists of *mythological* and *literary* (designations of fictional creatures), *conceptual* (terminology of erroneous scientific concepts), *ideological phantoms* (symbol of social utopias, illusions, etc.) (Norman, 1994, p. 53). G. Pocheptsov’s statement that the imperial board needs phantoms for self-preservation (Pocheptsov, 1998, p. 77) allows explaining phantom mass media and policy language globalism, observed in the modern world, including democratic countries.

The told testifies to the special importance of creative and magic functions of mass media language. Denotata phantom generates mythologems in media discourse sign space and determines specific category existence of predictability associated with content interpretation of various kinds of statements. Manifestation of magic language function acts phydeistic character as a condition of media phantom existence, caused by such media discourse characteristics, as irrationality, support on subconsciousness. Media discourse institutionality allows the addressee to accept reality for political, economic, social and other imaginations (real mediated, interpreted pictures), created and transferred by communicative intermediaries – politicians and journalists. Voter’s protection from TV, radio and press killers during State Dumas elections of the Russian Federation in 2003 is supposed in the form of indirect ban on analytics, any commenting of election campaign because of all candidates enumerating need that is reflected in the following outgaming: *Vybory 2003 goda doverili osveshchat’ tol’ko Gerasimu i Mu – Mu. (Elections 2003 entrusted to shine only to Gerasim and Mu-Mu.)* (TV, Radio, 09.2003)

Influence in the media discourse binds preferentially to the impact on the emotions and the subconscious, and not the mind, logical thinking. Especially it distinguishes political, religious, advertizing communication with the

addressee where the suggestive moment prevails over rational, and the success of communication is based on win of sympathy and trust of the addressee. Esoteric character or media discourses secret speech is depending on degree of its mythological character. Myth contains secret, riddle, represents miracle expectation, belief in supernatural, illusory consciousness generation. Mythological and esoteric characters are more inherent in a discourse in totalitarian systems (Kravchenko, 1999). Esoteric character depends on media institute, its political and other orientation, its interests and purposes. The flip side of esoteric character is the divination which is purposely put in media messages. Institutionality of the mass media language correlates with the leading pragmatical principle of interest (the message has to be interesting, to contain new, unknown information) and prediction as prognostic message (addressee carries out predictive activity which is consciously programmed), leans on stereotypes and myths, creating various images.

Along with institutionality process of perception of information messages is influenced by stereotypes. People knowledge accumulated both in personal experiences of communication, and from other sources, compiled and fixed in people minds in the form of steady representations – stereotypes. Stereotypes as a type of social setting are widely used by the person at people assessment as simplify, facilitate knowledge process. The term “social stereotype” is entered into social psychology by U. Lippman (Lippmann, 2007) to refer to preconceived representations and opinions. According to him, the main stereotypical estimation reasons are the intellectual efforts economy principle, and functions of group values, authorities, views and opinions protection. It is about evaluative stereotypes rather than habits. Gender stereotype is a people idea of how men and women really behave. Professional stereotype as a kind of a social stereotype is a personified profession image, i.e. the generalized image of a typical professional (Kunitsyna *et al.*, 2001, p. 337-338). Image being a kind of a social stereotype is a picture, representation, by associations’ method allocating object of additional values which don’t have the bases in real object properties, but possess social importance for perceiving this object. It involves guessing; stimulates

imagination, demands skills to live at image level from person or organization, carries out regulative, motivational and mobilizing functions. Image makes inspiring influence and can turn into a stereotype. Stereotypes act as regulators of social relationship. They are distinguished by economy of thinking, an excuse their own behavior, aggressive tendencies satisfaction, way of group tension exit, inaccuracy, falsehood, emotional and estimated character, relative stability. In longitudinal studies the effect of attenuation, the movement toward bigger schematization and abstraction is found. Information received earlier, has stronger impact on category formation, than a refutation of this information. Therefore in mass media various pseudo-sensations, slanders, libel based on stereotypes (sudden disappearance of authority, etc.) are actively used.

We will take as a basis stereotype understanding as spiritual formation developed in people consciousness, emotionally painted image, transferring values in which there are elements of the description, evaluation and prescription (Kunitsyna *et al.*, 2001, p. 330). According to the content a stereotype is a set of the properties, attributed to any group, characterized by a positive or negative orientation, degree of its internal coherence and bias degree. After V. Krasnykh we distinguish behavior stereotypes (define communicative behavior) and representations stereotypes (predetermine a set of associations and a language form of their expression) (Krasnykh, 2003). Ethnic stereotypes are defined as simplified, schematized, and emotionally painted and extremely steady images of any ethnic groups or communities, easily postponed for all representatives of these groups. National stereotype, designating entirely national group, assumes presence of certain feature of all group members, comprises an assessment, compliance with which makes it the same for all members of the group. Use of a negative estimated stereotype in respect of others is a powerful tool of self-identification. National and ethnic stereotypes changes happen very slowly and are caused by relationship of national and ethnic groups (Sorokin, 1994). The higher the stereotypical perception is, the brighter the manifestation of the inability to communicate is (negative correlations with this parameter, as well as insight and intuition), and the

greater the exposure is. Too low indicators of stereotypes also worsen possibilities of successful interaction. By people who are guided in assessing stereotypes, communicative competence is well developed that is explained by ability to use communicative stamps. It should be noted that stereotypes are not the only reason of the simplified and schematical other people representations. Barriers to understanding other people are psychological defense mechanisms that distort the truth in the subjective direction necessary to the addresser subjective, prejudices and biases.

## DISCUSSION

Impact on the addressee reaches extent of suggestion and creates the prejudices as which emergence reasons act labels “hanging”, rough, scornful in relation to another education style, unexpected children’s emotional injuries by interacting with “strangers”. Prejudices are widespread and steady as, like stereotypes, realize an economical way of thinking, are hardly owing to conformism and fanaticism. Being an essential marker of authoritarian religious person they become part of thinking (Allport, 1968, p. 179), are activated by anxiety and threat to sense of security. The most widespread in political propaganda, advertizing are manipulations with basic estimated categories: “advantage – harm”, “acceptable – unacceptable”, “good – evil” – the expressions subordinating to another, heading hierarchy of estimated terms.

For example, symbols since the 50th:

### GOOD/EVIL

*Progress (war, ecology, diseases), science (the invention of atomic weapons and destruction technologies),*

**GOOD** – aerobics, jogging,

**EVIL** – AIDS, drugs;

symbols since the 90th:

**GOOD** – environment, “green”, family, safety, balanced budget, political correctness;

**EVIL** – terrorism, sects, preservatives.

Any speech influence spheres possess certain characteristics. So, for example, in food advertizing are used as positive concepts: “low-calorie”, “light”, “low sodium”, “environmentally friendly”, and negative concepts: “artificial

colors”, “preservatives”, “salt”, “pesticides”, “nitrates”, etc.

Conscious, purposeful approach to stereotyping clearly demonstrated all leading Russian TV channels during the 1996 presidential elections in Russia. To illustrate this, let us turn to the content of the news programs of the three leading channels – ORT, RTV, NTV – June 28, 1996, a week before the 2nd round of elections (I. Smirnov, “Nezavisimaya Gazeta” / “The independent newspaper”, 28.07.1996). Content of our interest is the information that aims to combat competitor.

### ORT “Novosti” (18.00 chas.)

Sozdan Vserossiyskiy demokratcheskii soyuz: v svyazi s etim yego lider Rybkin ob’yasnyayet, kak protivostoyat’ kommunizam. Glava LDPR Zhirinovskiy prizyvayet svoikh storonnikov ne golosovat’ za lidera kommunistov Zyuganova. Ministr sotsial’noy zashchity Bezlepkina: kommunizam nel’zya doveryat’ posty v pravitel’stve, tak kak “za sotsial’nuyu sferu dolzhny otvechat’ professionaly”. Prem’yer-ministr Chernomyrdin vspominayet glavu tsarskogo pravitel’sтва Stolypina: “Mechtam o sotsialisticheskoy perevorote nastupit konets”. Prazdnik na Ukraine: novaya Konstitutsiya – “pobeda demokratcheskoy ideologii nad kommunisticheskoy!”.

### (ORT “News” (18.00 hrs.)

The All-Russian democratic union is created: in this regard its leader Rybkin explains how to resist to communists. The head of LDPR Zhirinovskiy calls on his supporters not to vote for the Communist leader Zyuganov. Social Protection Minister Bezlepkina: Communists can’t be trusted positions in the government as “professionals have to be responsible for the social sphere”. The Prime Minister Chernomyrdin remembers the head of the imperial government Stolypin: “Dreams of socialist revolution come to an end.” Holiday in Ukraine: the new Constitution is “a victory of democratic ideology over communistic ideology!”)

### RTR “Vesti” (20.00 chas.)

S’yezd kompartii V’yetnama, kadr: nishchaya starukha s protyanutoy rukoy. Prezident Yel’tsin: “Mne ne o chem razgovarivat’ s sytyym demagogom ot partii” (o pryamykh teledobatakh s liderom kommunistov Zyuganovym). Zyuganov protiv SMI (obshcheye vyrazheniye negodovaniya v zapisi). Dlinnaya i konkretnaya rech’ glavy LDPR



Zhirinovskogo s rugan'yu v adres kompartii: "kto iz kommunistov, mozhets byt', ran'she vremeni uydet iz zhizni...". Patriarkh Aleksey II kommentiruyet vyskazyvaniya lidera dvizheniya "Trudovaya Rossiya" Anpilova protiv khrama Khrista Spasitelya. Akter Zhzhenov: "YA smotryu po fanaticnym ostervenelym litsam, kotoryye vykhodyat s Zyuganovym..." ... "Nikto v Rossii v 17-m godu ne dumal, chto budut unichtozhat' tselye narody..."

**(RTR "Vesti" (20.00 hrs.)**

Communist Party Congress of Vietnam, picture: poor old woman with a cap in hand. President Yeltsin: "I have nothing to talk to the satiated party demagogue" (about direct TV debates with Communist leader Zyuganov). Zyuganov against mass media (the general expression of indignation in record). The long and concrete speech of the head of LDPR Zhirinovskiy with abuse to Communist Party: "someone from communists, maybe, will die ahead of time..." ". The patriarch Alexy II makes comments on statements of the movement leader "Labor Russia" Anpilov against the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Actor Zhzhenov: "I look on fanatical frenzied persons that go with Zyuganov..." ... "Anybody in Russia in the 17th year didn't think that they will destroy the whole people..." ".)

**NTV "Segodnya" (19.00 chas.)**

Prezident Yel'tsin o pryamykh teledybachakh so svoimi sopernikami na vyborakh: "Mne ne o chem diskutirovat'". Kommentariy teleprogrammy o press-konferentsii Zyuganova, kotoryy "vystupil s razdrzhennym zayavleniyem v adres SMI". "Sensatsiya" – dlinnaya antikommunisticheskaya rech' glavy LDPR Zhirinovskogo: "Ibo s 17-go goda eta politicheskaya sila... Dazhe v krovat' zalezli kazhdomu grazhdaninu...". Informatsiya: Demokratcheskyy soyuz Rybkina, Borisa Fedorova i Shakhraiya protiv kommunistov. Novaya Konstitutsiya Ukrainy, kompromiss "bez "rukhovtsev" i kommunistov, kotoryye ne smogli preodolet' ideologicheskoye dogmy i vneshniye zakazy".

**(NTV "Today" (19.00 hrs.)**

The president Yeltsin about direct TV debates with his rivals on elections: "I have nothing to discuss". TV program comment on a press conference of Zyuganov who "made the

angry statement to mass media". "Sensation" – the long anti-communistic speech of the head of LDPR Zhirinovskiy: "Because since the 17th year this political force... Even into a bed got to each citizen...". Information: Rybkin, Boris Fedorov and Shakhrai's Democratic Union against the Communists. The new Constitution of Ukraine, compromise "without "rukhovtsy" and communists who couldn't overcome ideological dogmas and external orders".)

Such content concentrated, rigidly form built leading TV channels information and news line repeating day by day within two-three months allowed to build and strengthen a resistant anti-communistic stereotype in public consciousness.

Psychological mechanism of formation and change of installations and stereotypes includes the following components.

#### **Information source and installation subject compliance**

In a case with formation of stereotypes in pre-election presidential fight in 1996 in Russia information source (mass media and standing behind them power and financial structures), information subject (anticommunism and pre-existing installations in consciousness of the addressee) corresponded each other, had the general positive assessment. Therefore mental tension at the most audience part didn't arise. Election campaign was carried out in the direction of fixing installations and stereotypes.

#### **Installations changes and stereotypes destruction at dissonance approach**

L. Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory notes contradictions between information messages and addressee's knowledge about reality (Festinger, 1957) with the mental tension which lead to installations, beliefs, stereotypes change, eventually, to consciousness splitting.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Thus, as shown by our research, in the last decade due to the intensification of political activity in the world and the global informatization the mass media language became an intense study object of psycholinguistics, cognitive linguistics, text linguistics, discourse linguistics. Intensity of information media processes in many respects is defined by structure of their spatial features: center

and periphery relations; nature of horizontal and vertical linkages and subjects relations, concentration of social, political, military, economic, ideological forces and factors operating in the world (global, intercontinental) international and national, regional and local space. Despite the fact that all people belonging to the same society, live in unified physical space, their mentality is different. In media language features of language consciousness, thinking, individual and mass speech behavior which reflects the institutional, stereotypical and mythological media markers of modern society are shown. Influence realization consideration in different media discourse genres, influence dynamics establishment in media language, further cognitive models and strategies in research of tropes influence on the addressee in the media discourse, discursive portraits of domestic and foreign mass media examination and comparison from the point of view of their impact force, identification of tropes influence force in the discursive space by comparing of various discourse types in the mass media (political, advertizing, sports, etc.) are interesting and perspective to research the speech influence problem in the media discourse.

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