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This special issue “Multimodality and Transmediality” of the scholarly journal “Cognition, communication, discourse” focuses on cognitive semiotic, transmedial, and multimodal approaches in linguistics and language education. In this issue, Ukrainian and Polish scholars detail conceptual foundations of these approaches and study polysemiotic texts in architecture and public space, US media discourse and its Ukrainian translations, texts in pharmaceutical advertising, postmodern fairy tales and short stories, readers’ reception of American political narrative, and multimodal and transmedial tools of language teaching and learning.

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TRANSMEDIAL PRESENCE OF VERBAL TEXTS IN ARCHITECTURE AND PUBLIC SPACE. BETWEEN INFORMATIVITY AND EMOTIVITY

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Abstract

From the semiotic viewpoint, architectonic structures and the surrounding public spaces can be seen as texts to be read and interpreted within proper historical, social, and cultural contexts. In addition, they are almost always *multimodal*, that is *polysemiotic texts* whose content becomes complemented with pictorial elements (paintings, sculptures), with written or oral language and, on occasion, with music.

I intend to focus specifically on the presence of *verbal texts* inside, on or around buildings (mostly within an urban space), which is a case of *textual embedment*. Functions of written inserts, inscriptions, signboards, tablets, posters, banners, graffiti, etc. are multifarious. They range from informational and explanatory, to devotional, to political–critical, to – in the end – poetic, experimental, creative, funny, and ironical. Aesthetically, they often enrich but sometimes violate architecture and public space. The following types of verbal texts will be considered briefly, according to their content:

- 1) up-to-date information (warnings, advertisements, etc.);
- 2) historical-institutional information;
- 3) religious-devotional (including critical) information;
- 4) political commentaries;
- 5) poetic and experimental creations, mostly artistic critical games played by *conceptual* and *post-modern artists*.

Several of my examples qualify as instances of *urban creativity*, specifically *street art* and *graffiti of resistance* (cf. Awad & Wagoner, 2017; Stampoulidis, 2019).

In the spirit of *cognitive semiotics*, defined by Zlatev, Sonesson, and Konderak (2016) as the transdisciplinary, conceptual-empirical study of meaning, mind and communication, this article (based on a corpus of twenty-six inscriptions gathered from many international locations) raises the issue of the interplay of *informativity* and *emotional load* contained in verbal texts immersed in public settings. Undoubtedly, the message conveyed by architectural carriers and urban space contributes synergically to the overall meaning of the verbal messages that accompany them.

Key words: *verbal text, architectural carrier, public space, urban creativity, street art, graffiti, informativity, emotivity.*

1. Introduction – architecture and public space as polysemiotic texts

From the semiotic viewpoint, architectonic structures and the surrounding public spaces can be seen as texts to be read and interpreted within proper historical, social, and cultural contexts (including religion, politics and ideologies). In addition, they are almost always *multimodal, polysemiotic texts*



(cf. Basista & Nowakowski, 2012; Chrzanowska-Kluczewska, 2019; Li & Zlatev, 2022), whose content becomes complemented with pictorial elements (paintings, sculptures), with written or oral language and, on occasion, with music.

There is a difference, however, between architecture as a non-verbal text and texts produced in natural language. To quote Karl R. Kogler (2018), a professor of architecture and urban design (Hochschule, München): “Architecture talks only about itself – language can talk about anything”. On the assumption that both media produce texts in their own right, it is worth considering in what manner verbal language in an architectonic and urban context can really talk about “anything”.

Amir Biglari (2023) rightly points out that “not only is every sign defined within a system of signs, and therefore in interaction with other signs, but also every system of signs is defined in relation to and in interaction with other systems of signs” (p. 33). This is an essence of *transmediality*, according to its broad definition, that is “the communication of information across more than one medium or sign system” (Saldre & Torop, 2012, p. 25). Undoubtedly, the message conveyed by architectural carriers and urban space contributes synergically to the overall meaning of the verbal messages that accompany them, with *synergy* defined as “the combined power of a group of things when they are working together which is greater than the total power achieved by each working separately” (“Synergy”, 2008, p. 1479). Hopefully, the illustrative material provided below will corroborate the synergic effects of verbal language embedded in architectural and urban settings.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Cognitive semiotics

To quote Biglari again, the contemporary semiotic thought espouses a wide approach, according to which,

semiotics aims to describe and explain under what conditions, how, and why signs and meanings are (or are not!) conceived, produced, organized, oriented, circulated, communicated, shared, perceived, apprehended, understood, interpreted, embodied, felt, lived, transformed, translated, and so forth. (Biglari, 2023, p. 33).

The highlighted aspects of semiosis remain specifically in the focus of attention of the branch of general semiotics called *cognitive semiotics (Cogsem)*, defined by Jordan Zlatev, Göran Sonesson, and Piotr Konderak (2016; cf. also Sonesson, 2010) as the transdisciplinary, conceptual-empirical study of meaning (implying the study of signs), mind, and communication. The authors emphasize two features of Cogsem:

The first feature is that cognitive semiotics focuses on the study of meaning, and does so through a transdisciplinary (implying tighter contact than “interdisciplinary”) combination of methods and concepts from at least semiotics, cognitive science, and linguistics. (Zlatev, Sonesson, & Konderak, 2016, p. 9)

The second feature is a methodological adherence to what Zlatev (2015, p. 1058) dubbed *the conceptual-empirical loop* (discussed also in Stampoulidis, 2019, p. 32). The idea is to start with a conceptual presentation of a given phenomenon and then proceed to its empirical analysis, the results of which should become a feedback to the initial conceptual analysis. In brief, the empirical examination is expected to bring enrichment of the initial statements and ideas, what Zlatev, Sonesson and Konderak (2016, p. 9) refer to as the reinvigoration of theoretical claims by means of real-life experience, that is a field research.

It is in this spirit that my presentation proceeds. Based on a corpus of twenty-six inscriptions gathered from various locations, it raises the issue of the interplay of *informativity* and *emotional load* contained in verbal texts immersed in public and architectonic settings. My study is not a full field research, however, in the sense in which Georgios Stampoulidis (2019) enriched his photo documentation of the stories of resistance in Greek street art with *go-along interviews* with street

artists. In our case the tracking of the anonymous producers of the inscriptions recorded in situ has been impossible for technical reasons. In the future, the enlargement of the photo documentation of verbal inscriptions spotted in a public space could include go-along interviews with people visiting particular buildings or circulating in the urban space where these, mostly anonymous, inscriptions appear. This kind of street research would, however, demand a long and painstaking preparation (of questionnaires, among other things) and might be limited to one location only (like in the case of Stampoulidis, who investigated street art in Athens).

1.2. Informativity

In the broad understanding of this term, *informativity* emerges as:

a fundamental property of the whole existence, beside dynamism and connectivity, structurality and infinity; it consists of the capacity of universe, as well as of each its component of integrating, of structuring and developing, of transmitting and using information. (Pană, 2018, in Ch. 387, n. p.)

In application to natural language, informativity refers to the extent to which an utterance is new or unexpected for the receivers: a) in terms of content, b) in terms of other features, e.g. form. Although Information Theory invokes the notion of *probability* as crucial in measuring information content, in the case of *human language* we talk about a *contextual* rather than *statistical probability* of occurrence of specific information.

We can distinguish between *three orders of informativity* of verbal texts (de Beaugrande & Dressler, 1990, Ch. 7):

- 1) **First-order informativity** refers to highly probable/expected utterances (defaults and preferences). Such utterances are trivial, even boring; they do not attract much attention and depend on a low processing effort.
- 2) **Second-order informativity** refers to a standard quality of utterances/texts from which we acquire new and interesting information. Upgrading from first-order or down-grading from third-order to this level are common interpretative practices to make the processing effort viable.
- 3) **Third-order informativity** characterizes rare utterances that call for a heightened attention and increased processing effort. Such texts are unusual, more attractive but can be disturbing or difficult to interpret (e.g. poetry).

Since information content comes in degrees (but still accepting this triple categorization), I will postulate to look at particular inscriptions analysed below as located along a *cline of informativity*, moving from first to third-order informativity.

In his dynamic vision of the *semiosphere*, that is culture seen as a universe of semiotic systems and their constant creative reorganization, Juri Lotman (1992/2004/2009) invokes the notion of *explosion*, a sudden change in a paradigm brought about by “geniuses – the creators of art” (p. 10). Explosion seems to him to be closely related to the concept of informativity: “The moment of explosion is also the place where a sharp increase in the informativity of the entire system takes place. The developmental curve jumps, here, to a completely new, unpredictable, and much more complex path” (Lotman, 2009, p. 14).

1.3. Emotivity in public spaces

Emotivity is a two-sided term – it either denotes the state in which the addresser voices their own emotions (the expressive aspect of this phenomenon) or refers to the emotional response achieved in the addressee/interactant (the affective aspect). While studying emotivity of texts as semiotic constructs, it is worth remembering that the two aspects intertwine and may be difficult to separate. Authors of emotionally-marked messages will certainly want to arouse similar feelings in their recipients.

The literature on the emotive behaviour of human beings is huge – we usually distinguish three *emotion theories*: *neurological* (related to the brain activities in emotional states), *physiological* (descriptive of the corporeal states and reactions related to emotions), and

psychological (focused on the mental side of emotive states and actions) (cf. Jain & Asawa, 2019). It is the last approach which is of special interest to us.

In what follows, I use the terms *emotion* and *feeling* interchangeably (so does LeDoux, 2015), although António Damasio (1994) applies the former to indicate an unconscious state while the latter to describe a conscious experience. Saif M. Mohammad (2017, p. 174) proposes an umbrella term *affect* that includes emotions, feelings, and attitudes.

One of the well-known psychological theories of Paul Ekman (1992), distinguishes six *basic emotions*: fear, anger, disgust, surprise, happiness, and sadness. In that Ekman adapted a previous theory of Silvan Tomkins, who back in the 1960s had distinguished eight *primary emotions*, to wit surprise, interest, joy, rage, fear, disgust, shame, and anguish (cf. LeDoux, 2015, pp. 121-22). Joseph LeDoux has challenged two claims of Ekmanian approach, namely that basic emotions are inborn and universal. His own idea, which is of import to our Cogsem research, sees in emotions *cognitive constructs* “assembled in consciousness” but also influenced by a specific *socio-cultural context*, in which the role of natural language is substantial (LeDoux, 2015, pp. 123-24). Consequently, in studying an emotional load of linguistic texts embedded in architecture and public space, we should analyse two distinct kinds of emotivity – linguistic and architectural/urban.

Linguistic emotivity is centred on the expressive power of language in sharing feelings that appears on all levels of linguistic description – phonetics, lexicon (including morphology), syntax, semantics, stylistics, and pragmatics. In her book *Linguistic emotivity* (2002), Senko K. Maynard explores a vast range of expressive linguistic devices in Japanese discourse, claiming that language does not reflect only *logos* (information) but is equally powerful in voicing *pathos* (emotions). The essence of her study could be extrapolated to other natural languages, albeit a specific repertoire of emotive devices is language- and culture-specific.

Over the last decades, interest in urban emotivity has been gradually increasing, related to a broad issue called *the psychology of public spaces*. Daniel Paül i Agusti and Montserrat Gurrero i Lladós (2021) devote their study to the influence of public spaces on human well-being and specifically to the way different emotions are generated by “the morphology of the space”, which includes a built environment and light effects, among other factors. The study by Sarah Robinson and Juhani Pallasmaa (2015) titled *Mind in architecture: Neuroscience, embodiment, and the future of design* analyses how a built environment affects our conditions of living – our thoughts, emotions, and behaviour. The concept of *emotive architecture* is nowadays related to the creation of such structures that would be not only functional and aesthetically pleasing but also integrated with the fabric of the surrounding city, in sum dweller-friendly.

A number of studies devoted to street art (including graffiti) have emphasized the way in which it emotionally impacts our perception of streetscape and a wider urban environment (Graffiti, n. d.; Street art, n.d.; Stampoulidis, 2019; Pérez-Izaguirre & Liñero-Reglero, 2023). All these research projects testify to the need of developing a holistic, transdisciplinary approach to the position of natural language in architecture and public space.

One of problems in this kind of analysis is related to the issue of measuring emotions, which is a challenge in itself. Paül i Agusti and Guerrero i Lladós (2021) have, for instance, turned to an objective quantitative approach based on measurements of the heart-rate variability of persons in changing public environments. In turn, Jain and Asawa (2019) propose a computational (AI) model of emotion-elicitation conditions for five basic emotions: Happiness, Joy, Sadness, Fear, Anger, and Surprise. On the linguistic side, Mohammad (2017) compiled the Affect Intensity Lexicon (AIL), which contained approximately 6,000 English words associated with four basic emotions – fear, joy, sadness, and anger – and arranged them on a *scale of intensity* running from 0 to 1 (0.1..., 0.2..., 0.3... etc.). Such scales appear more subjective as they are mostly based on introspection. Also, basic emotions often blend into other feelings, known as *secondary emotions*. In the face of such theoretical problems, for my corpus of inscriptions analysed below I postulate a *scale* similar to that of the cline of informativity and running from emotionally neutral to highly emotional messages, without however daring to measure their intensity in any way. The two scales will be separate but can overlap at times.

2. Discussion – verbal texts in architecture and urban space

I intend to focus specifically on the presence of *verbal texts* inside, on or around buildings (mostly within an urban space), which is a case of *textual embedment* and *situatedness*. Functions of written inserts, inscriptions, signboards, tablets, posters, banners, graffiti, etc. are multifarious. They range from informational and explanatory, to devotional, to political-critical, to poetic, experimental, creative, funny, and ironical. They can but do not need to be decorative; they often enrich but sometimes violate architecture and public space

The following types of verbal texts will be considered briefly:

- 1) up-to-date information (warnings, advertisements, etc.) – Fig. 1–4;
- 2) historical-institutional information – Fig. 5–15;
- 3) religious-devotional (including critical) information – Fig. 16–17;
- 4) political commentaries – Fig. 18a,b–19;
- 5) poetic and experimental creations, among them artistic critical games played by *conceptual* and *post-modern artists*, who elevated the verbal element to form the essence of visual art. They experimented with placing inscriptions within or close to museum buildings such as Carlos Ginzburg (1971) or Perla Benveniste and others (1973) (cf. Kalyva, 2016), or placing inscriptions on posters and boards and exhibiting them in urban spaces, as in J. Holzer's *Truisms* (1977-1987), which appeared across New York and *Projections* (1996 – ongoing), with poetic quotations executed in neon on important buildings worldwide (cf. Sobita, 2018) – Fig. 20–24.

Several of our examples qualify as instances of *urban creativity*, specifically *street art* and *graffiti of resistance* (cf. Awad & Wagoner, 2017; Stampoulidis, 2019).

Figure 1 shows a bronze statue by Eduardo Paolozzi, based on William Blake's study of Isaac Newton's figure and placed in the courtyard of the British Library in London. On the pedestal of the statue there appears an informational tablet that says: "For your safety do not climb". It is a warning, thus informative and performative at the same time, but its banal information (first order informativity) stands in stark contrast with the grandiose statue of Newton, who would probably smile at the message, which, unintentionally, corroborates his theory of gravity. The feeling of discomfort, if not of fear itself, habitually related to warnings will probably evaporate in this particular artistic context that is able to trigger a jocular interpretation.



Fig 1. Eduartdo Paolozzi, Isaac Newton. The British Library, London, UK.



Fig.2. A traditional brick house, early 20th c. Tyumen, Western Siberia.



Fig.3. A barber's shop signboard, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Figure 2 features a traditional brick house in Tyumen, Western Siberia, which belonged once to a family of Polish merchants and industrialists active there since the 19th century until the Soviet Revolution. One of informational tablets about the historic value of the building says: “A monument of architecture from the beginning of the 20th century. Under the state protection” (second order informativity). The second, warning tablet (Fig. 2) on the upper window frame stands in contrast with the official tablet and alerts the viewer: “Be careful! Snow may fall from the roof” (first order informativity). Interestingly, the notice itself appears in a very safe place. Warnings, by pointing to danger, are meant to arouse the feeling of disconcert and prompt to cautious behaviour.

Figure 3 shows a painted notice that functions like a *signboard*, advertising a barber shop around the street corner in Kathmandu, Nepal. The Nepali inscription, based on an English phrasal loan, informs: “Maharadžagandź Famous Gents Hair Parlour”. A rather unimpressive streetscape spices up this high-flown ad, making it – in a sense – grotesque. This is a good example of how the architectural surroundings influence the content of the verbal message. Meant as a proud description of the barber's shop, the positioning of the message can trigger an unwanted, humorous connotation. The moral is to examine the building and its environs before one puts up a verbal text on it.



Fig.4. Linguistic landscape in George Town, Penang, Malaysia.



Fig.5. A tablet on the Old Townhall, Ingolstadt, Bavaria, Germany.

Figure 4 features a linguistic landscape in George Town, Penang, Malaysia. Signboards and commercial ads display a “decorative” mosaic of alphabets and scripts. The Romanized Malay (Rumi), Chinese and Tamil scripts intermingle. THE PEARL signboard contains information in four languages – English, Rumi, Chinese, and Tamil. Since this commercial signage belongs to private owners, it can evade the regulation protecting Malay (*Bahasa Malaysia*) as the official language. Signboards are informative (second order), albeit the information seems chaotic. However, the aesthetics of the street has been severely violated, making it far removed from the idea of emotive architecture.

Figure 5 shows an informational decorative tablet on the wall of the Old Townhall in Ingoldstadt an der Donau (Bavaria, Germany), with the city's heraldic symbol (1882). A nice example of second order informativity, it summarizes the city's history: "8th c. property of the Carolingian dynasty; 841 property of the Niederaltaich monastery; [...] 1472-1800 seat of the Bavarian State University; 1828 fortress city of Bavaria". It is both informative and aesthetically pleasing.



Fig.6. A commemorative tablet, Toledo, Spain.



Fig.7. Signboard over the entrance to the Tartu University Library, Estonia.



Fig.8. A commemorative tablet, Vilnius, Lithuania.

Figure 6. Beautifully executed in ceramic tiles, this tablet from a building in Toledo, Spain commemorates Queen Isabel I Catholic (1451-1504) on the five-hundredth anniversary of her death. The ruler of Castilla, called also "the mother of queens", Isabel passes as the creator of modern Spain. She was very devout, even fanatical in spreading Roman Catholicism, but also clever, bold and independent in her decisions. The tablet does not provide any historical details but mentions only its founders, hence its informativeness is rather low (first order), which is compensated by the pictorial effect.

Figure 7 shows an informational inscription (in Latin) and a bilingual (Estonian-English) signboard over the entrance to the Tartu University Library. Apart from the historical information, the board contains an apt motto: "meeting point of wisdom and youth", which is emotionally positively tinged. The Latin name of the institution *Bibliotheca Universitatis Tartuensis* strengthens its academic position.

Figure 8 features a bilingual Lithuanian-Polish commemorative tablet from Vilnius, Lithuania dedicated to the great Polish Romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz: "On 6 November (25 October) 1824 from this house departed Adam Mickiewicz, exiled to Russia, leaving Vilnius for ever". This tablet,

apart from objective historical information (second order), is filled with a political allusion to the poet's deportation and with emotional undertones. The emotion triggered is that of sadness caused by losing one's home and possibly a suppressed anger directed against the Tzarist Russia.



Fig.10. A monument to Viacheslav Chornovil in Kyiv, Ukraine.



Fig.9. A commemorative tablet, Ingolstadt, Germany.



Fig.11. A World War II notice, Beamish Living Museum of the North, Yorkshire, UK.

Figure 9 features a commemorative tablet from one of the houses in the Old Town in Ingolstadt: “Dr. Jörg Faustus from Heidelberg stayed in Ingolstadt in 1528. This is what is stated in the report of the city council of Ingolstadt from Wednesday after St. Vitus’ Day in 1528. According to a trustworthy document, the same Dr. Jörg Faustus lived in this house”. The inscription contains a specific historical information (second order) about a famous personage. However, it does not mention the fact that Faustus was quickly expelled from the city for practising black magic and necromancy, which can be treated as a case of the so-called *partly suppressed information*.

Figure 10 shows the monument to Vyacheslav Chernovil (1937-1999) – a prominent politician, public figure, journalist, human rights activist, one of the main fighters for Ukrainian independence during the Soviet era, and a Hero of Ukraine (posthumously). He spent more than 15 years in Soviet prisons and exile. In 1991, Chornovil became a candidate for the presidency of Ukraine, but died in a car accident. Clearly another case of *partly suppressed political information*, the inscription commemorates the Hero who devoted all his life to the independence of his country and wrote: “May God help us to love Ukraine more than anything else ...”.

Figure 11 takes us to the Beamish Open-air Museum, called The Living Museum of the North, in Yorkshire, the United Kingdom. This is an official warning from the period of World War II, which may come as a surprise to the visitor (third order informativity). It is another instance of *partly suppressed information*, unclear to the reader. Only upon asking a guide, we learn that the view of sheep giving birth to lambs may, apparently, result in a miscarriage (!). The warning must have been highly emotional in the period when it appeared but it has lost its impact of arousing fear with the passage of time.



Fig. 12. A decorative tablet, Toledo, Spain.

Figure 12 presents a historical decorative tablet in the Old Town in Toledo which contains a highly emotional description of the city, authored by Miguel de Cervantes:

*TOLEDO,
A ROCKY SADNESS,
THE GLORY OF SPAIN,
THE MOST LUMINOUS OF HER CITIES.*

It expresses a praise of the beloved city, not unique to the Spanish spirit and culture, as illustrated below. The praise implies joy and happiness at being the city's dweller and/or lover and its informativity appears to be high (third order, possibly, due to its poeticity).

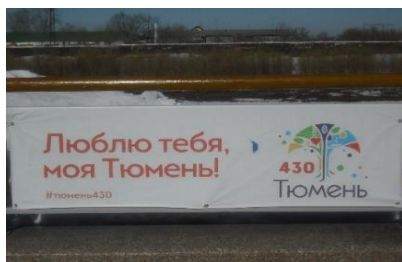


Fig.13a. First banner, Tyumen, Western Siberia.



Fig.13b. Third banner, Tyumen, Western Siberia.



Fig.14 A street money-box, Tyumen, Western Siberia.

Figure 13a features a banner on the bank of the River Tura in Tyumen, Western Siberia. The banner declares in a highly emotional way “I love you, my Tyumen”. The number 430 refers to the age of the city (1586-2016), stated in the second banner that refers objectively to the foundation of the city in the territory seized from the ancient Tatar khanate of Tyumen (from *tumen* – “a thousand horses”). The emotional load of the message far surpasses the historical information.

Figure 13b. The third banner in this series is highly emotional as well, in fact based on a *hyperbole* strengthened by an exclamation mark. It boasts that Tyumen is the best city in the world. It again mentions the 430-year-long period of the city's existence under Russian Empire but ignores the ancient Muslim culture of the enslaved Tatars whose descendants still live there today.

Figure 14. A street sculpture-money-box asking for donations to support homeless dogs in Tyumen contains a very emotional inscription that makes a moving appeal to passers-by to set in motion their empathy: “Take a liking to a helpless, lonely, homeless dog!”



Fig.15. A historical notice, Beamish Open-air Museum, UK.

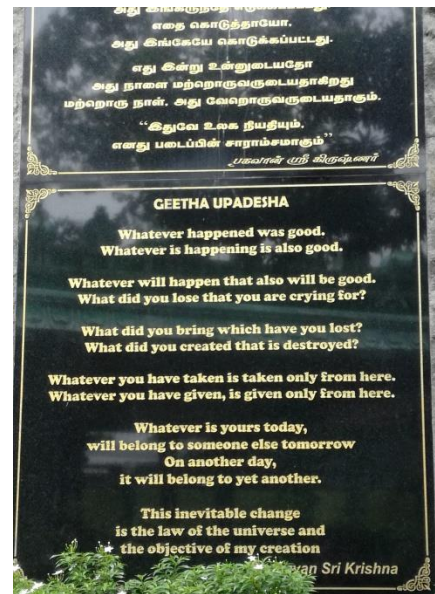


Fig.16. A meditative tablet, the Batu Caves, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Figure 15. In stark contrast to the previous message, this historical notice in Beamish Open-air Museum warns people against trespassing private grounds. The message is clear – there will be no mercy shown to the roaming dogs and so its unexpected cruelty makes it belong to third order informativity. The notice comes from the pre-World War II times, apparently, and may have referred to an area with the protected wildlife.

Figure 16 shows a bilingual meditative tablet at the entrance to the Batu Caves near Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Caves are not only a natural wonder but also a sacred place of pilgrimages for the Hindu believers who come here to worship Rama, Krishna, Hanuman, and the local deity Murugan. Inside the Smaller Caves, colourful sculptures tell the visitors the story of Rama, his beloved wife Sita, the monkey-god Hanuman, and the demon Rawana. Part and parcel of the Hindu tradition, the myth of *Ramayana* is made accessible to foreigners thanks to bilingual tablets in Tamil and English. This ornamental, truly decorative bilingual tablet, with its dual sacral and informational function, helps tourists appreciate the wisdom of a religious citation from the *Geetha Upadesha* on the instability of human existence (situating itself close to third order informativity).



Fig.17. A religious graffiti, Kraków, Poland.

Figure 17 contains a critical religious graffiti from Krupnicza Street in Kraków, Poland, photographed in 2023. The inscription declares that Pope John Paul (Jan Paweł) is not saint at all.

The criticism of the Pope is related to the disclosure of the wave of paedophilia raging across the Roman Catholic Church that the Pope had no courage to eradicate. Pope John Paul II is still considered saint by the majority of Polish older populace, no wonder then that this year a part of the graffiti has been painted over, covering the words “not at all”. As a result, we get the confirmation of the anonymous painter’s belief in the Pope’s sanctity (and possibly their anger at the original graffiti). This testifies to the fact that verbal messages placed within a public space can enter into a dialogue or argument, carried on by anonymous participants who feel free to physically alter some graffiti.



Fig. 18a. An anti-war notice, Tartu, Estonia.



Fig. 18b. A political poster, Tallinn, Estonia.

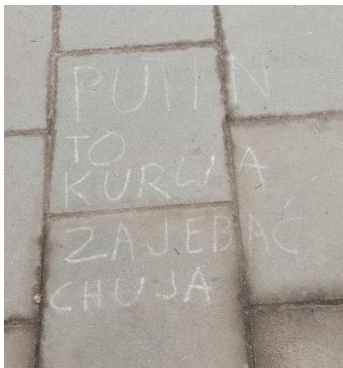


Fig. 19. A political graffiti on the pavement, Kraków, Poland.



Fig. 20. A classroom panel, University of Huddersfield, UK.

Figure 18a. A notice protesting against the attack of Russia on Ukraine in Tartu, Estonia, appeared near the Arch Bridge over the Ema River in February 2022. Accompanied by candles decorated with the Ukrainian national colours, this notice, also in blue and yellow, is emotional in a succinct and restrained way. It uses also a widely recognized symbol of peace, a white dove.

Figure 18b features a political poster in a shop window in Tallinn, Estonia, soon after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The angry appeal to Putin, the invader, makes an apt visual allusion to the Stalinist past of Russia. The face is half-Stalin and half-Putin and the notice plays visually on four colours, each with a symbolic undertone.

Figure 19 records a political graffiti on the pavement at a bus-stop in Kraków, Poland, executed in March 2022. The message is highly emotional, verbalized in an extremely vulgar way (cf. Lefebvre, 1970/2003, p. 19 on political speech going “savage”). It says, “*Putin is a whore*”,

which is followed by a general appeal, “*Let us slam this fucker*”. It clearly belongs to the **graffiti of resistance**.

Figure 20 shows a classroom at the University of Huddersfield, Yorkshire. The University architecture makes a clear allusion to the industrial past of Yorkshire. The wall in front is decorated with a colourful panel. You have to move closer to read the motto addressed to the students and scholars who happen to share this interior, “*Scientists investigate that which already is; Engineers create that which has never been*”. The quotation comes from Albert Einstein, contrasting the activity of scientists with that of engineers, in a sense endowing the second group with greater creativity. This message can be categorized as third order informativity, unexpected and surprising to many beholders.

Figure 21a¹ (reproduced and discussed in Kalyva, 2016, p. 88) takes us to the exhibition *Arte de Sistemas I* in the Museum of Modern Art in Buenos Aires in 1971. Specifically, we are faced with Carlos Ginzburg’s artwork *Tierra*. This example of **conceptual art** consisted of a series of placards and notes hung on the fence of an empty plot opposite the museum building. One of the placards asked: “*What is there inside this terrain?*” The verbal text was inserted into a public space of a dreary townscape. The notices, engaging the attention of passersby, invited them to enter the museum (“here opposite”), climb the stairs, and take the elevator to the 9th floor. They promised “an aesthetic experience” taking place within that mysterious enclosed plot. If one followed all indications, one would arrive at the museum’s top floor and find the notice “*look here*”, readable from the outside, glued on the windows. If one looked out of the windows, one would see the plot across the street from where the “aesthetic experience” had started. “*Tierra* operates on the borderline between the inside and the outside of the museum, treating it as that which isolates art from life and helps maintain a disjointed experience of social reality” (Kalyva, 2016, pp. 88-89). So far, the artwork exists as a sequence of written verbal messages combined with architecture and cityscape. Let’s look out of the window, then.

Figure 21b¹ (reproduced in Kalyva, 2016, p. 89) is another work from Carlos Ginzburg’s series of placards and notes. Now, we can see the word ‘*tierra*’ (‘earth’) written in huge white capital letters on the plot behind the fence. At this point, as Kalyva notices, the work triggers an interplay between what one reads and what one sees (*signifiant – signifié*). Instead of having a body of its own, this work juxtaposes its textual components with what we can see around us. “Standing behind a glass window at the intersection of private/public and social/artistic, the gallery visitor is forced to confront the reality” (Kalyva, 2016, p. 90). The reality of the 1970s in Argentina was very grim – Ginzburgian “fenced and muted earth” makes a strong allusion to the atmosphere of political repressions, acting as a critique of imprisonments and murders, though seen nowadays, it would have probably lost its original political impact and might be interpreted in an ecological perspective (“fenced and muted earth of urbanization, industrialization, climate changes, etc.”). This proves that artworks, especially of the described type, undergo **re-contextualization** with the passage of time.

Figure 22¹ (reproduced and described in Kalyva, 2016, p. 170) is a view of the installation “*Proceso a nuestra realidad*” produced by Perla Benveniste, Eduardo Leonetti, Luis Pazos, Juan Carlos Romero, and Edgardo Antonio Vigo in the Museum of Modern Art in Buenos Aires in 1973. The installation consists of a piece of wall covered with political posters and a huge inscription “*Ezeiza is Trelew*”. The reference is made to the political prisoners killed in Trelew on 22 August 1972 and to the massacre at the Ezeiza airport upon Juan Perón’s return from exile on June 20, 1973. Political slogans frequently seen in the streets, what we can call **the street art of resistance**, are now inserted into the museum space as a “non-elitist” art, which becomes upgraded:

The erection of a concrete wall with political posters and sprayed slogans and its placement in an exhibition room brings the “street” inside the museum room. But it not only does so in terms of materials and structure, but also in terms of what the public sees daily in the streets, and is circulated and mediated by the press. Moreover, it [the wall] physically divides the space of art and impedes the circulation of the gallery visitors, who are now faced with the wall’s subject matter of murder, impunity and repression. In this way, and rather than representing violence as something that takes place elsewhere, the work forces the viewer to confront reality in this supposed asylum for art and to recognise the extents of violence and corruption blocking the path towards democracy. (Kalyva, 2016, p. 170)

Through political slogans and posters, as well as their association with the mass media, prominence is given to the verbal text. Yet, its support (the wall) and the new architectural context (the museum interior rather than an open public space) are indispensable in providing a fuller interpretation of this *multimodal, polysemiotic artefact* (verbal, visual, spatial, tactile). The change of the original setting (the street) into the museum space adds a new quality to the message communicated by the wall, the graffiti, and the posters that it carries. In a word, a *synergic artefact* has been produced, in which particular elements strengthen one another mutually.



Fig. 23. One of Jenny Holzer's Truisms, New York, USA.



Fig.24a. Jenny Holzer, Projection, Chicago, USA.



Fig.24b. Jenny Holzer, Projection, Kraków, Poland.

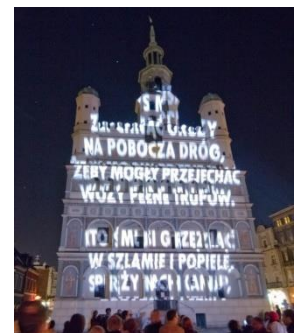


Fig.24c. Jenny Holzer, Projection, Poznań, Poland.

Figure 23. One of Jenny Holzer’s Truisms placed in Times Square, New York, in 1982 (Sobita, 2018, p. 228). Between 1977 and 1987, Holzer, an important American representative of text art, produced around 300 clichés, slogans, aphorisms, and quasi-aphorisms, executed in a wide range of media and placed, among other locations, on various buildings and walls. “Times Square Show” displayed various truisms on the famous Spectacolor Board, among them my favourite, “Expiring for love is beautiful but stupid”.

Figure 24a features one of Holzer's *Projections*, the artistic program started in 1996 and still ongoing, in which poetic texts have been projected (mostly as neon light) on famous buildings around the world. Holzer drew some of her inspirations from Polish poetry, so in 2008 she had a quote from Wisława Szymborska's poem "Children of Our Age" (1986, translated into English by Stanisław Barańczak and Claire Cavanagh) shown on the Chicago Opera. The text read "*Whatever you say reverberates, whatever you don't say speaks for itself. So either way you're talking politics*". This projection imitated a political banner carrying a slogan that generated associations with ideology. Arguably, it functioned as a decorative element on the building's façade as well. Using the Lotmanian parlance, poetry inscribed into the architectural texture becomes a text embedded in the *semiosphere*.

Figure 24b. In 2011, Holzer displayed a quote from Czesław Miłosz's "Pory roku"/"Seasons" on the walls of the Wawel Castle in Kraków. We can see only a part of the poem: [Transparent] *TREE FULL OF MIGRATING BIRDS ON A BLUE MORNING, [Cold because there is still snow] IN THE MOUNTAINS* (translated by Renata Gorczyńska and Robert Hass). This poetic text decorates one of the most famous architectural landmarks in Poland and is reflected in the Vistula River. In this way the semiosphere overlaps with the biosphere, quite aptly, as the poem is dedicated to the latter.

Figure 24c shows another of Holzer's *Projections*, this time on the Townhall in Poznań, from the year 2011. A citation from Wisława Szymborska's "Koniec i początek"/"The end and the beginning" appeared on the Townhall's façade:

*After every war/someone has to clean up./Things won't straighten themselves up, after all.
//Someone has to push the rubble/to the sides of the road, so the corpse-laden wagons can pass.
//Someone has to get mired/in scum and ashes,/sofa springs,/splintered glass,/and bloody rags.* (Szymborska, 1993).

The message of this poem, shocking at times, is ultimately optimistic: The end of every war marks a new beginning.

With our discussion of the empirical corpus ended, it is time now to recapitulate our findings.

3. Conclusions

I hope that my selection of twenty-six figures analysed above (drawn from a wider corpus of sixty inscriptions and notices gathered from several urban locations over the period 2009–2023, enriched with three examples of urban conceptual art from the 1970s) presents the gamut of verbal texts of varying types and content situated in different architectural and urban settings.

As for the *informational load*, unsurprisingly, a large number of notices belongs to **second order informativity**, that is they carry important but not striking information (*Figs. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13a, 14, 18a,b, 19*). Only *Figs. 1, 2* and *6* seem to be banal enough to be classified as **first order informativity**. In turn, *Figs. 11, 12, 13b, 15, 16, 17, 20-24* can be classified as **third order informativity**.

As a result, we obtain the following, very rough, **informativity scale**:

1, 2, 6 ... 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13a, 14, 18a,b, 19 ... 11, 12, 13b, 15, 16, 17, 20-24

One caveat, however, is in place – the informational load of a given message will ultimately depend on the individual expectations of the viewers, their general knowledge, cultural background, historical awareness, etc. For this reason face-to-face interviews with recipients of such messages would be of immense help. This is, of course, a programme for future research.

The **emotivity cline**, subjectively arranged according to my own appraisal, runs from neutral to emotional and highly emotional:

EMOTIONALLY NEUTRAL => EMOTIONAL => HIGHLY EMOTIONAL:

3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 16, 20, 21a, 23, 24b =>

1, 2, 7, 10, 18a, 21b, 24a =>

8, 11, 12, 13a, 13b, 14, 15, 17, 18b, 19, 22, 24c

All the above-listed non-artistic and artistic projects testify to the importance of verbal texts inside, on, or near architectural creations and within public spaces, and to the need of interpreting this kind of polysemiotic/hybrid textuality against a specific cultural, social, and ideological background. The verbal text within an architectural setting can inform, enlighten, please aesthetically, make the viewers think, or even shock them. The architectural and urban text may be completed, adorned, or disturbed by the presence of the verbal text. But neither of them will remain untouched in such a coexistence, in a novel co-construction of meaning. A new artefact comes to life and a new reading is required according to the assumption of *synergy*. This powerful semiotic mechanism constantly reshapes the Husserlian *Lifeworld* of our experience and the Lotmanian *semiosphere*, which constitutes a fundamental part of the former. The ephemerality of several verbal texts in their urban locations on walls and pavements makes their semiosis a fleeting and fragile phenomenon. If we want to preserve at least part of them as corpora valid for research and memory, their recordings should be taken without delay.

Two *clines* emerge additionally while grouping the above-mentioned texts: that of *informativity* (*informational content*) and of *emotivity*. The scales overlap in an irregular fashion. Whereas informativity appears to be more open to objective evaluation, the emotional load of specific inscriptions may vary greatly between the intended emotionality of the creator and the emotional interpretation (if any) of the receiver. For this we would need a *go-along interviewing* with the creators and interpreters of verbal texts in architecture and social space (cf. Stampoulidis 2019).

Notes

¹Figures 21a, 21b, and 22 cannot be reproduced here due to the copyright issues.

Declaration of competing interest

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ТРАНСМЕДІЙНА ПРИСУТНІСТЬ ВЕРБАЛЬНИХ ТЕКСТІВ В АРХІТЕКТУРІ ТА ПУБЛІЧНОМУ ПРОСТОРИ. МІЖ ІНФОРМАТИВНІСТЮ ТА ЕМОЦІЙНІСТЮ

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Анотація

З точки зору семіотики, архітектурні споруди та прилеглі до них публічні простори можна розглядати як тексти, що мають бути прочитані та інтерпретовані у відповідному історичному, соціальному та культурному контекстах. Крім того, вони майже завжди є мультимодальними, тобто полісеміотичними текстами, зміст яких доповнюється образотворчими елементами (картинами, скульптурами), письмовою чи усною мовою, а іноді й музикою.

Я маю намір зосередитися саме на присутності вербальних текстів всередині, на або навколо будівель (переважно в міському просторі), що є випадком текстової емблематики. Функції письмових вставок, написів, вивісок, табличок, плакатів, банерів, графіті тощо різноманітні. Вони варіюються від інформаційно-роз'яснювальних, присвятних, політико-критичних до поетичних, експериментальних, креативних, жартівливих та іронічних. Естетично вони часто збагачують, але іноді порушують архітектуру та публічний простір. Коротко розглянемо наступні типи вербальних текстів, відповідно до їхнього змісту:

- 1) актуальна інформація (попередження, реклама тощо);
- 2) історико-інституційна інформація;
- 3) релігійно-обрядова (у тому числі критична) інформація;
- 4) політичні коментарі;
- 5) поетичні та експериментальні твори, переважно художньо-критичні ігри концептуальних і постмодерністських митців.

Деякі з моїх прикладів кваліфікуються як приклади урбаністичної творчості, зокрема стріт-арту та графіті опору (див. Awad & Wagoner, 2017; Stampoulidis, 2019).

У дусі когнітивної семіотики, яку Zlatev, Sonesson, і Konderak (2016) визначають як трансдисциплінарне, концептуально-емпіричне дослідження значення, свідомості та комунікації, моя стаття (на основі корпусу з двадцяти шести написів, зібраних з багатьох міжнародних локацій) піднімає питання взаємодії інформативності та емоційного навантаження, що міститься у вербальних текстах, занурених у публічне середовище. Безсумнівно, повідомлення, що передається архітектурними носіями та міським простором, синергетично впливає на загальний сенс вербальних повідомлень, які їх супроводжують.

Ключові слова: вербальний текст, архітектурний носій, публічний простір, урбаністична творчість, стріт-арт, графіті, інформативність, емоційність.

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CONSTRUCTING COMPETING DISCOURSES ON THE RUSSO-UKRAINIAN WAR: JOURNALISTIC TRANSLATION IN WARTIME

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Abstract

This study employs critical discourse analysis to examine two opinion articles published in Western press that propose divergent strategies for the West in the Russo-Ukrainian war. The analysis focuses on three key aspects: representations of the war, evaluations, and dialogicality. The study also analyses Ukrainian journalistic translations of the articles. One article argues for equipping Ukraine with all necessary weapons for a swift victory over Russia, while the other supports incremental weapons supplies, leading to a prolonged war. The findings reveal that the former article portrays the war as Ukraine's fight for independence and a battle to uphold international law, whereas the latter predominantly depicts it as territorial aggression that threatens global nuclear security. The former article employs a wide range of evaluative devices to underscore Russia's brutality and condemn the delayed provision of Western weapons to Ukraine. In contrast, the other article primarily employs evaluative language to amplify fears of nuclear escalation. Regarding dialogicality, one author structures his text as an implied dialogue with hypothetical opponents, employing rhetorical questions, imperative sentences, irony, and first-person narration, whereas the other author references individuals with institutional authority to validate his assertions. The divergent treatment of these articles by the Ukrainian media, both at the macro and micro levels – reflected in the significant disparity in translations (12 to 1) and the manner in which the articles were reframed during translation – reveals the gatekeeping function of translation and suggests the Ukrainian media's focus on positive news from the West as a means to keep up the country's morale.

Keywords: *critical discourse analysis, Russo-Ukrainian war, journalistic translation, gatekeeping, reframing, media.*

1. Introduction

The Russo-Ukrainian war, which began in 2014 and escalated with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, has had significant implications for international relations. While Western leaders have expressed their support for Ukraine, varying perspectives have emerged regarding the most effective strategy to bring an end to the war. In the early stages of the war, a significant controversy revolved around two contrasting viewpoints: one arguing for the provision of all necessary weapons to Ukraine for a swift defeat of Russia, and the other advocating a cautious approach to prevent nuclear escalation, even if it meant a prolonged war.

The media play a crucial role in conveying these perspectives to the public, particularly through opinion articles. As observed by van Dijk (1995), securing press support is essential for the successful implementation of foreign policies. Many of these opinion articles are translated by Ukrainian media, and during the translation process, they are often reframed and recontextualised. Journalistic translation research, which burgeoned over the past two decades (Valdeón, 2015a, 2020), showed that translation in the media “obeys norms and configures practices that are different from those traditionally associated with translation” (Zanettin, 2021, p. 1). Journalist translators engage in various textual manipulations, such as restructuring the text, altering paragraph organisation, and adding or omitting information as they deem necessary, in order to align with the ideological agendas of their respective media companies and cater to the varied expectations of their readership (Bielsa & Bassnett, 2009). Valdeón (2022, p. 118) points out that journalistic translation performs a gatekeeping function, which can be traced on two levels:

...On a macro-level translation functions as filter to allow news writers/translators and companies to consider what should be published and what should not, and on a micro-level it serves to select the parts of the original articles that need to be adapted or omitted during the translational and editing process.

Consequently, journalistic translation research “has been pushing the boundaries of the very concept of ‘translation’ and of the discipline of translation studies” (Schäffner, 2020, p. 120), and some scholars have argued for a broader definition of the term ‘translation’ to include the specifics of journalistic translation (Davies, 2015; van Doorslaer, 2010; Schäffner, 2012), and the author of this paper shares this view.

This study focuses on two opinion articles advocating opposing strategies for the West in the Russo-Ukrainian war and their Ukrainian translations. The articles were published in Western press, in English, at around the same time, following the “Ramstein talks” in January 2023, which addressed the potential delivery of battle tanks to Ukraine (NATO, 2023). My *objective* is twofold: first, to analyse the arguments and discursive strategies employed by the authors as they present their perspectives on the optimal strategy for the West in the Russo-Ukrainian war, and second, to examine how the Ukrainian media reframe these articles and explore the ideological implications of such reframing. It should be noted that some scholars consider opinion articles to be “stable sources” whose “content and integrity are respected” in the process of translation (Hernández Guerrero, 2009, p. 45; English translation cited from Valdeón, 2015b, p. 443), in contrast to most other journalistic texts. However, previous research (e.g., Kamyants, 2023) showed that often opinion articles are also reframed in translation, mainly through modifications in their titles and leads.

2. Methodology

The analysis of discursive strategies draws on Fairclough’s (1995, 2003) and van Leeuwen’s (2008) models of critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA aims to identify how text producers legitimise their representations of reality and promote their ideologies. It examines the construction of attitudes, opinions, and beliefs in discourse to appear ‘natural’ and ‘common sense.’ Discourse represents a particular perspective on a social practice, allowing ideologies to infiltrate people and institutions by presenting them as neutral rather than reflective of specific interests (Fairclough, 1995, p. 41). In CDA ideology is understood as “a system of ideas, beliefs, practices and representations which operate in the interests of an identifiable social class or cultural group” (Luke, 2001).

Fairclough’s (2003) and van Leeuwen’s (2008) models of CDA, despite their distinct theoretical perspectives and analytical focuses, can be combined to enhance the comprehension of discourse and its social implications. Fairclough’s model highlights language’s role in reproducing

and challenging power dynamics and social inequalities. Van Leeuwen (2008), on the other hand, focuses on recontextualisation, the process of transferring and adapting discourses across contexts, involving reshaping and reinterpreting texts while preserving or modifying their meaning and ideology.

The analysis in this paper also incorporates appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005), which complements CDA by providing a framework to analyse evaluative language and its ideological implications.

It is important to note that comparative CDA of original and translated texts differs from monolingual CDA (Gu, 2022). Monolingual CDA focuses on analysing a text or set of texts as a coherent whole, to identify the underlying ideologies that shape the discourse. In contrast, comparative CDA of originals and their translations tends to examine shifts in translation and their ideological implications. By examining these shifts, bilingual comparative CDA can provide insight into the ways in which translators negotiate the relationship between source and target texts and how this negotiation may reflect broader ideological differences. Monolingual CDA has been actively employed in journalism studies (e.g., Bednarek & Caple, 2012; Kelsey, 2017; Khosravini, 2010; Richardson, 2007; Tolson, 2006), while bilingual comparative CDA is increasingly utilised in journalistic translation research (e.g., Daghigh, 2024; Guangjun & Huanyao, 2015; Kamyants, 2022; Kuo & Nakamura, 2005; Ping, 2022; Valdeón, 2005; Wang & Feng, 2018). In this present study, monolingual CDA is used to analyse discursive strategies in the original opinion articles, with a specific focus on three aspects: representations of the war, evaluations, and dialogicality. The analysis of translated articles draws on comparative CDA.

3. Analysis of the article “*What the hell is the West waiting for?*”

The first article to be analysed in this paper is authored by Boris Johnson (2023a), former UK Prime Minister. The Daily Mail, which published the articles, described it as an “extraordinarily powerful and emotional rallying cry” to the West (Johnson, 2023b.). Its publishing in the British tabloid may suggest that Johnson aimed to reach a wider audience and communicate his message to a broader cross-section of the population. The article was selected for analysis due to its translation and extensive discussion in numerous Ukrainian media. Johnson urges Western nations to promptly provide Ukraine with the necessary weapons to defeat Russian military forces. This section will examine the discursive strategies employed by Johnson to effectively convey this message.

3.1. What is at stake

Discourses are significantly shaped by representations. Fairclough (2003, p. 136) points out that while social events bring together various elements, normally not all of those elements are included in the representations of the events. Texts can be analysed in terms of which elements are included in the representations of events and which are excluded, and which of the elements that are included are given the greatest prominence. Besides, social events can be represented at different levels of abstraction and generalisation. Instead of comparing the ‘truth’ about an event with its portrayal in specific texts, Fairclough proposes comparing diverse representations of the same or broadly similar events.

At the most abstract level, Johnson portrays the war as Ukraine’s war of independence and a broader fight to defend international law:

- (1) *This is now a war of independence, and history teaches us that wars of independence only end one way.*
- (2) *Those heroic people are fighting for all of us. The Ukrainians are fighting for the Georgians, for the Moldovans, for the Baltic states, for the Poles – for anyone who might in due time be threatened by Putin’s crazed revanchism and neo-imperialism. They are fighting for the principle that nations should not have their borders changed by force (Johnson, 2023a).*

The portrayal of the war as Ukraine's war of independence underscores its existential significance for Ukraine. Presenting the war as a fight to uphold international law highlights the role played by Ukrainian resistance in upholding values that transcend Ukraine's borders. These representations put forth a persuasive case for Western support of Ukraine by appealing to both liberal values and the self-interest of Western audiences. In contrast, alternative representations in Western press may depict the war as a territorial dispute (Charap, 2023; Haass & Kupchan, 2023) or even as the West's war against Russia (Mishra, 2023).

Representations of concrete war events, influenced by evaluative language, will be examined in the following subsection.

3.2. Evaluation

Evaluative statements reflect the author's value system and serve to construct relations between authors and their readers (Fairclough, 2003; Thompson & Hunston, 2000). Evaluation can be directly 'inscribed' in discourse through the use of evaluative vocabulary, or it can be 'invoked', i.e. implicit (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 61-62). Martin (2000, p. 143) emphasises that expressing attitude is an interpersonal matter aimed at eliciting a response of solidarity from the addressee. Johnson employs a variety of evaluative devices, which will be discussed below.

3.2.1. Explicit evaluation. Through the use of explicit evaluation, Johnson commits himself explicitly to values, as in the following example:

- (3) *All [Ukrainians] need to [take back the land bridge to Crimea] is the kind of kit the West has in abundance, and which right now could have no higher moral or strategic purpose than to help Ukraine* (Johnson, 2023a).

According to van Leeuwen (2008, p. 21), 'moral evaluations' are invariably linked to legitimations, meaning that the concept of something being 'morally good' inherently connects to a legitimising discourse. In this particular case, this discourse is centred around universal human values, such as compassion and justice, as is evident from further examples below:

- (4) *What happened here in the suburbs of Kyiv was sickening. But it is happening in every part of Ukraine that Putin continues to occupy: torture, rape, mass murder.*
 (5) *The Ukrainian expulsion of Russian troops from Kyiv will go down as one of the greatest feats of arms of modern times.*
 (6) *It is a brutal and unprovoked attack on a blameless European country...*
 (7) *Those heroic people are fighting for all of us* (Johnson, 2023a).

In examples 4–7 Ukraine is associated with positive evaluations such as 'the greatest feats of arms,' 'blameless,' and 'heroic,' while negative evaluations including 'sickening,' 'torture,' 'rape,' 'mass murder,' and 'brutal' are attributed to Russia. This pattern is evident throughout Johnson's article.

3.2.2. Implicit evaluation. In contrast to inscribed evaluation, which explicitly conveys judgements, implicit evaluation depends upon an assumption of shared familiarity with implicit value systems between author and interpreter (Fairclough, 2003, p. 173), as in examples below:

- (8) *Come with me into the ochre mud of the churchyard in Bucha, past the bullet-ridden church of St Andrew.*
 (9) *Stand over the graves of some of the 416 inhabitants of this town – nine of them children – who were shot by the Russians in an attempt to terrify the rest.*

- (10) *Look at the photos of their corpses, their hands tied behind their backs, left in the streets to rot or to be eaten by dogs. Stand with me by the blackened remains of an apartment block in Borodyanka, the twisted plumbing and smashed children's toys...*
- (11) *Try to meet the pleading eyes of the people who pulled 162 corpses from the rubble, and who searched for the 28 whose remains were never found (Johnson, 2023a).*

Examples 8–11 also feature inscribed evaluation such as “terrify,” and “pleading,” but the key judgement in these examples is implicit. It is the condemnation of Russia for committing horrendous war crimes. This condemnation is based on the belief, presumably shared by Johnson’s readers, that killing and torturing civilians, as well as destroying civilian infrastructure, are war crimes. “Bucha” in example 8, a Kyiv suburb where the Russian armed forces conducted a mass murder of Ukrainian civilians and prisoners of war in March 2022, has become an implicitly evaluative term synonymous with harrowing mass killings of civilians. Implicit evaluation, as Munday (2012, p. 38) argues, may be more persuasive for readers than direct inscription because it allows opinion to disguise itself as reporting.

Rhetorical questions

The title of Johnson’s article, “What the hell is the West waiting for?” is a rhetorical question that suggests the West is not providing military support to Ukraine quickly enough, and expresses the author’s frustration with this situation through the use of the colloquial phrase ‘the hell.’

The article contains other examples of rhetorical questions, including:

- (12) *What conceivable grounds can there be for delay? Why are we not giving the Ukrainians all the help that they need, now, when they need it?*
- (13) *Why should we fear to provoke [Putin], when he has already shown what he will do without the slightest provocation?*
- (14) *How can he ‘escalate’, when he has already reached such a pitch of barbarism that he is systematically pulverising the homes of civilians? (Johnson, 2023a).*

Through the use of rhetorical questions and also imperative sentences, which will be quoted further below, Johnson is implicitly entering a dialogue, or a polemic, with those who take a different view. The examples provided above clearly demonstrate that the rhetorical questions in the article effectively emphasise a single point: there are no valid reasons for the West to postpone the provision of weapons to Ukraine.

Irony

Johnson’s article also uses irony, serving a dual purpose: as an evaluative device and as a means of enhancing the dialogical nature of the text. When using irony, the author echoes an opinion attributed to someone else, simultaneously dissociating themselves from it, tacitly expressing a disapproving attitude (Wilson & Sperber, 2012, p. 60). To comprehend irony, one must compare the seemingly expressed view with what is presumed to be true within the shared cognitive context (Hatim & Mason, 1990, p. 99). The effective use of irony, therefore, helps consolidate shared worldviews between the speaker and the hearer.

An example of irony in Johnson’s article is shown below:

- (15) *The Ukrainians need hundreds of tanks, and they should be getting them from the Americans, the Germans, the Poles, and many others. Where does the Western world need to station those tanks at the moment? Guarding North Rhine-Westphalia? Protecting Tennessee? Prowling the villages of Wiltshire? (Johnson, 2023a).*

The rhetorical questions in example 15 are clearly ironic. By asking these questions Johnson effectively ridicules and critiques Western leaders who hesitate to provide tanks to Ukraine.

3.3. Dialogicality

Examples 8–11 above use imperative sentences. Imperative sentences open Johnson’s article and recur repeatedly throughout the whole text. Coupled with rhetorical questions, they give the sense that Johnson is dialoguing with others rather than just doing a monologue. Besides, Johnson oscillates between writing personally (‘I’-statements), writing impersonally, and writing on behalf of the Western community, for example:

- (16) *I am proud that it is the UK that is once again making the running.*
 (17) *Will he escalate with a battlefield nuclear weapon? Really? I don’t believe it for a second.*
 (18) *We cannot be blamed for the geo-strategic disaster that Putin has brought upon himself.*
 (19) *It is not our job to worry about Putin, or where his career might go next, or to engage in pointless Kremlinology. Our job is to help Ukraine win – as fast as possible* (Johnson, 2023a).

Fairclough (2003, p. 180) observes that it is common for politicians to communicate their ideas as if they were engaging in polemical dialogue with others and speak both personally and on behalf of others. The first-person narration in a political text can have a few effects on the audience. It can establish authenticity and credibility, as the author is sharing their experiences and perspectives. It can also create an emotional connection by evoking empathy and understanding from the audience.

In summary, Johnson presents the war as Ukraine’s war of independence and a broader fight to defend international law. By utilising explicit and implicit evaluations, he underscores Russia’s brutality and criticises the delayed delivery of Western weapons to Ukraine. Johnson constructs his text as an implicit dialogue with hypothetical opponents, employing all these discursive strategies to bolster his case for swift weapons supplies to Ukraine.

4. Analysis of the article “Ukraine gave up nuclear weapons at our behest. Here’s what we owe them”

The second opinion article to be analysed in this paper was published by the Washington Post and is authored by Jon Wolfsthal, “a senior adviser to the nuclear disarmament group Global Zero, a board member at the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists and an adjunct senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security” (Wolfsthal, 2023). This article was selected for analysis randomly from a pool of articles that were published around the same time as Johnson’s article but advocate a contrasting strategy for the West. Wolfsthal’s article, notably, expresses a similar moral standpoint regarding the war as Johnson’s article. Wolfsthal believes that supporting Ukraine in its war with Russia is a moral obligation for the West. However, he argues against swift weapons supplies to Ukraine due to concerns about potential nuclear escalation. Instead, Wolfsthal advocates a strategy of “*a long and incremental war*,” acknowledging that this approach is deeply distressing for the people of Ukraine but may be the only viable option to ensure Russia’s defeat without further escalation. The following analysis examines discursive strategies employed by Wolfsthal to construct this case.

4.1. What is at stake

Wolfsthal portrays the Russo-Ukrainian war as an act of Russian aggression against Ukraine, as is evident from example 20 below:

- (20) *This is a strong pragmatic case for supporting Ukraine that is distinct from the obvious moral one — that we simply must help a young democracy to defend itself against a neighboring aggressor state* (Wolfsthal, 2023).

In the broader context of the article, this perspective encompasses both “*territorial aggression*” and a violation of Ukraine’s sovereignty:

- (21) *Countries interested in territorial aggression will see nuclear weapons as an asset...*
- (22) *Any outcome to today's war that fundamentally undermines Ukraine's long-term sovereignty would add to the argument that Kyiv made a fatal error in giving up on nukes* (Wolfsthal, 2023).

These representations support Wolfsthal's argument that the West bears a moral responsibility to assist Ukraine, considering it as a victim of aggression that gave up its nuclear weapons under the guidance of the West. Furthermore, examples 21 and 22 bolster Wolfsthal's "pragmatic case" for supporting Ukraine by highlighting the need to prevent nuclear proliferation. While these portrayals somewhat diminish the war's significance compared to Johnson's article by not emphasising its existential nature for Ukraine or its immediate implications for international order, they still make a compelling case for Western countries to support Ukraine, appealing to both liberal values and the self-interest of Western audiences.

As regards depicting specific war events, it is worth highlighting that Wolfsthal's article does not contain any representations of such events.

4.2. Evaluation

Although Wolfsthal employs fewer evaluative devices compared to Johnson's article, he still utilises evaluative statements to express his standpoint and elicit a sense of solidarity from the reader.

4.2.1. Explicit evaluation. Wolfsthal uses explicitly evaluative statements to convey the central message of his article, which emphasises both the moral obligation of the West to support Ukraine and the imperative for an "incremental" approach to such support, due to the real risk of nuclear escalation. In particular, in example 20 above Wolfsthal explicitly articulates his moral position regarding the war. However, where evaluative language is most prominently employed in Wolfsthal's article is in his depiction of the peril posed by nuclear escalation. The article starts with an ominous description of the present moment in history as a prelude to the future "Armageddon":

- (23) *The world is on the cusp of a dangerous new nuclear era, and the war in Ukraine might be a glimpse of what is to come. Reflecting this, the hands of the iconic Doomsday Clock, an indicator reflecting the opinion of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists as to how close humanity finds itself to self-destruction, were recently moved up 10 seconds — to 90 seconds to midnight. This is the closest they have ever been to Armageddon* (Wolfsthal, 2023).

The above three opening sentences abound with negatively evaluative terms, such as "dangerous," "the war," "Doomsday," "self-destruction," and "Armageddon," and set the tone for the whole ensuing text. The gloomy narrative is complemented by a vivid visual element, a photograph of the mushroom cloud from a nuclear test above the Pacific Ocean, which is placed right under the headline. This is an example of how news texts, especially in the online format, rely on the visual mode to convey their intended message. As Riggs (2021, p.356) points out, "online, visual content is omnipresent and multiform, so that its influence on the communicative situation sometimes equals or even rivals that of the previously dominant written content." The three opening sentences, paired with the image of a nuclear mushroom cloud, may be seen as an example of fearmongering – a manipulative technique that consists in deliberately arousing public fear about a particular issue. News media often use fearmongering as a tactic to compete for attention, because humans are naturally inclined to pay special attention to danger, which has been crucial for survival throughout our evolutionary history (Shoemaker, 1996). On the other hand, fearmongering can make people fear wrong things and use too many resources to avoid unlikely dangers while more probable

dangers are ignored (Glassner, 2000). Political leaders exploit public anxieties, particularly about terrorism, to achieve their political goals by creating and contributing to an environment of fear (Altheide, 2003; Furedi, 1997; Robin, 2004). Fearmongering in Wolfsthal's article serves a dual purpose: firstly, to capture the readers' attention, and more importantly, to bolster the argument against swift weapons supplies to Ukraine by stoking fears of a potential nuclear war.

4.2.2. Implicit evaluation. The most noteworthy instance of implicit judgement (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 42–43) is the article's title, as it implies that it is morally right for the West to support Ukraine, since it gave up nuclear weapons at the behest of the West. The title also suggests that the target audience of Wolfsthal's article are readers who think accordingly, not those who prefer to take a neutral stance saying that it is not "their" war (e.g. Mishra, 2023).

4.3. Dialogicality

As mentioned in subsection 3.2.1, one way to legitimise a representation is through "moral evaluation." Another approach is to reference individuals who possess some form of institutional authority (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 105). To substantiate his assertion that the risk of a nuclear war is highly tangible, Wolfsthal cites the "*opinion of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*" (example 23). In advocating "incremental" assistance to Ukraine, Wolfsthal references the Biden administration's stance. Notably, he uses indirect reporting and narrative report of speech act – two ways of reporting that are often used manipulatively (Fairclough, 2003, p. 49-55). In particular, Wolfsthal says that President Biden and his key officials "clearly understood these risks from the start and have appropriately calibrated U.S. and NATO support for Ukraine to avoid, as they have said, World War III" (indirect reporting). For the same reason, continues Wolfsthal, "the [Biden] administration is clearly thinking ahead to the thorny issue of the end state of Crimea – a likely tripwire for possible Russian escalation" (narrative report of speech act). The latter sentence contains two hyperlinks – one to the author's own post published on his own website (Wolfsthal, 2022) and another – to the opinion piece "Blinken ponders the post-Ukraine-war order" (Ignatius, 2023) published by The Washington Post. It is hard to see how the hyperlinked post written by Wolfsthal himself can further support his claim that the Biden administration does not want Ukraine to de-occupy Crimea for fear of nuclear escalation. To read the whole post, one must subscribe to the website, which suggests that the purpose of the hyperlink is to promote Wolfsthal's website rather than provide supportive evidence for his claim. As regards the hyperlinked opinion article in The Washington Post, it does not explicitly state that the Biden administration believes that de-occupation of Crimea poses too great a risk of nuclear escalation. Granted, the article does say that an all-out Ukrainian campaign to seize the Crimean Peninsula seems unrealistic to "many U.S. and Ukrainian officials" – which is rather unspecific – "partly because Putin has indicated that an assault on Crimea would be a tripwire for nuclear escalation" (Ignatius, 2023).

At the same time, the opinion article clearly says that "The [Biden] administration shares Ukraine's insistence that Crimea, which was seized by Russia in 2014, must eventually be returned." As far as Mr. Blinken is concerned, the article points out that "he has been less worried about escalation risks than some observers". Consequently, Wolfsthal's implication that the Biden administration regards de-occupation of Crimea as a "tripwire for possible Russian escalation" appears unsubstantiated, as the hyperlinks do not provide any supporting evidence; in fact one of them suggests otherwise.

In summary, Wolfsthal portrays the war as Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which threatens global nuclear security. He employs evaluative language to amplify fears of nuclear escalation and cites the Biden administration as a source of support for his case for "incremental" weapon supplies to Ukraine and a long war.

5. Translations of Boris Johnson's article

Johnson's article was fully translated by three mainstream Ukrainian media outlets and one peripheral newspaper. Additionally, eight other media outlets published summaries of the article. Due to limited space, this section will focus on the analysis of only two translations – one full translation and another in summary form – both sourced from mainstream media. The objective is to showcase how the translations are reframed and recontextualised within the Ukrainian discourse surrounding the war.

5.1. Translation by Hromadske Radio

Hromadske Radio (Ukrainian for “Public Radio”) is a Ukrainian media company that operates as both a radio station and a web platform. It was founded by a group of professional journalists and is well-regarded for its commitment to independent and objective journalism (Detector media, 2023). As a non-profit organization, Hromadske Radio sustains its operations through a diverse range of funding sources. These include financial support from international organizations, foundations, and individual contributions.

The translation of Johnson's article published by Hromadske Radio involved some reformatting. Its title is:

(24) *“Давайте дамо українцям усе, що їм потрібно для перемоги, вже зараз” – гучний меседж Бориса Джонсона у великій статті (Hromadske Radio, 2023)*

Gloss: *“Let's give Ukrainians all they need for victory, right now” – Boris Johnson's powerful message in a big article.*

The first five paragraphs, vividly depicting the horrors of the Russian occupation, are translated verbatim, presented in italics and formatted as a direct quotation. Following these paragraphs, there is an introduction from Hromadske Radio, describing Johnson as “Ukraine's great friend”:

(25) *Так розпочинається стаття Бориса Джонсона, експрем'єр-міністра Великої Британії та без прикрас – великого друга України. Громадське радіо публікує переклад матеріалу, опублікованого в Daily Mail під заголовком: “Чого, в біса, чекає Захід” (Hromadske Radio, 2023).*

Gloss: *This is the beginning of an article by Boris Johnson, former UK Prime Minister and, without exaggeration, Ukraine's great friend. Hromadske Radio presents the translation of this piece published in the Daily Mail, titled: “What the hell is the West waiting for.”*

The rest of the text closely follows the original but is divided into sections, with each section preceded by a subheading in the form of a quote from the article:

(26) *“Це війна за незалежність” (“This is a war of independence”)*

“Де західному світу зараз потрібні ці танки?” (“Where does the Western world need those tanks at the moment?”)

“Наша робота – допомогти Україні перемогти – якомога швидше” (“Our job is to help Ukraine win – as fast as possible”) (Hromadske Radio, 2023).

One paragraph is formatted as a block quote, distinguished by being indented and styled in italics. This block quote corresponds to the following two paragraphs in the original text:

(27) *If they can take back that land bridge, or drive their way through it and cut it in two, the Ukrainians have won. It is game over for Putin.*

All they need to do it is the kind of kit the West has in abundance, and which right now could have no higher moral or strategic purpose than to help Ukraine (Johnson, 2023a).

By means of this reformatting, the translation published by Hromadske Radio frames the article as a voice of “Ukraine’s great friend” in the West, while accentuating the ideas and representations that were central to the prevailing discourse on the war in Ukrainian society at the time when the article was published.

5.2. Summary translation by Focus

Focus, a weekly socio-political magazine and news website, is owned by Ukrainian businessman Olexandr Borshcheych, who has been linked to oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky in various reports (Riaboshtan et al., 2020). In April 2022, the media company ceased printing the magazine, citing challenges in organising printing and delivery to subscribers during the period of martial law. However, its website continues to maintain popularity.

The title of Johnson’s article in the translation by Focus reads as follows:

(28) *Якого біса чекає Захід?! Українцям потрібні танки. І вони повинні отримати їх від США та Німеччини (Johnson, 2023c)*

Gloss: *What the hell is the West waiting for?! Ukrainians need tanks. And they should get them from the U.S. and Germany.*

The translation has an added lead quoting Johnson’s first-person narration:

(29) *“Не розповідайте мені про “ескалацію” чи ризик того, що ми якось спровокуємо Путіна на якесь чергове жахіття. Чи піде він на ескалацію із застосуванням на полі бою ядерної зброї? Серйозно? Я не вірю в це ні на секунду!” Думка (Johnson, 2023c).*

Gloss: *“Don’t talk to me about ‘escalation,’ or the risk that we will somehow provoke Putin to some fresh horror. Will he escalate with a battlefield nuclear weapon? Really? I don’t believe it for a second!” Opinion.*

The main body of the summary translation consists of six paragraphs, beginning with the ironic rhetorical questions from example 15. Remaining paragraphs discuss the possibility of nuclear escalation and are a literal translation of the corresponding paragraphs in the source text (ST). One sentence is presented as a block quote, visually distinguished by bold formatting and a larger font size. This block quote corresponds to the following sentence in the original text:

(30) *How can he ‘escalate’, when he has already reached such a pitch of barbarism that he is systematically pulverising the homes of civilians? (Johnson, 2023a).*

Three segments are formatted in bold font. They correspond to the following segments in the ST:

(31) *Where does the Western world need to station those tanks at the moment? Guarding North Rhine-Westphalia? Protecting Tennessee? Prowling the villages of Wiltshire?*

(32) *He would become a global pariah, and plunge Russia into such a state of cryogenic economic exclusion as to make the current sanctions look moderate.*

(33) *He wants to make us talk about nuclear weapons, because he wants to portray his war of choice as a stand-off between Nato and Russia. It is no such thing (Johnson, 2023a).*

As a result, the summary translation published by Focus highlights two aspects: Johnson’s assertion that the West has no valid reasons to postpone the supply of weapons to Ukraine and his belief that Putin’s nuclear rhetoric is merely a bluff.

In summary, both above translations emphasise the ideas that strongly resonated with the Ukrainian public discourse at the respective point in time. It is noteworthy that the perception of Johnson’s article in the new context differs. While Western audiences likely perceived it as a call to action, whether justified or not, the Ukrainian media framed it as the voice of a supportive friend and ally in the West.

6. Translation of Jon Wolfsthal's article

The article by Wolfsthal was translated by iPress, an internet media outlet with a peripheral presence, operating out of Lviv. iPress specialises in translating opinion articles sourced from Western press. No further information is available about this media outlet from open sources.

The translation published by iPress (iPress, 2023) is framed as an article discussing Wolfsthal's opinion. The article's title is modified in the target text (TT) to explicitly state that the United States has a moral obligation to support Ukraine's resistance to Russian aggression and hint that it is also in their interest to do so:

(34) *Україна відмовилася від ядерної зброї на вимогу США. Тож допомога Україні – не лише моральне зобов'язання Штатів – Washington Post (iPress, 2023).*

Gloss: *Ukraine gave up nuclear weapons at the behest of the USA. So assisting Ukraine is not only a moral obligation for the States – Washington Post.*

The original phrase “at our behest” in the title was translated as “at the behest of the USA,” possibly due to the author's nationality. This emphasises the United States' role in ending the war.

The translation has an added lead section that incorporates author information sourced from the Washington Post's website and offers a concise overview of the article's main idea. Notably, the lead also says that a protracted war strategy is not in the best interests of Ukraine:

(35) *Джон Б. Вулфстал – старший радник групи з ядерного роззброєння Global Zero, член ради директорів Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists та позаитатний старший науковий співробітник Центру за Нову Американську Безпеку в своїй колонії для Washington Post переконує, що США зобов'язані допомагати перемогти росію не тільки через те, що вони вимагали ядерного роззброєння України, але й у власних інтересах – інакше всі держави: і агресори, і ті, що прагнуть захисту – захочуть набутти ядерну зброю. Але він радить робити це довго і планомірно з метою уникнення ядерної ескалації. Це, звісно, не влаштовує нас, бо Україна стікатиме кров'ю через помилки “гуру” міжнародної політики з Вашингтону (iPress, 2023).*

Gloss: *Jon B. Wolfsthal, a senior adviser to the nuclear disarmament group Global Zero, a board member at the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists and an adjunct senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security, in his column for the Washington Post argues that the U.S. is obliged to help defeat Russia not only because it demanded the nuclear disarmament of Ukraine, but also in its own interests; otherwise all states – both aggressors and those seeking protection – will want to acquire nuclear weapons. However, he advises that the assistance should be provided over a long period of time and in a systematic manner to avoid the risk of nuclear escalation. This, of course, does not suit us, because Ukraine will bleed due to the mistakes of the ‘guru(s)’ of international politics from Washington.*

By explicitly stating that the concept of a prolonged war as a means to prevent nuclear escalation is Wolfsthal's personal opinion and by questioning its legitimacy, the journalist translator underscored the particularity, rather than universality, of this perspective (Fairclough, 2003, p. 46). The mention of the “guru(s)” in the lead introduces some ambiguity, as it is unclear from the Ukrainian text whether this is an ironic reference to one or several individuals. In Ukrainian the singular and plural forms of the word “guru” are similar. Theoretically, the term could refer to both those who advised Ukraine to give up nuclear weapons in the past and those who support a prolonged war to avoid nuclear escalation today. However, it is evident that Wolfsthal is one of the individuals being referred to in this context. The decapitalisation of the word “Russia” is a manifestation of a recent trend in Ukraine to demonstrate disrespect for the aggressor country and its leader through the deliberate decapitalisation of corresponding proper names.

The remaining text largely adheres to the original, with the inclusion of some additional content, as shown in examples 36 and 37 below:

(36)**ST**: *Ukraine's decision to resist nuclear temptation, real and palpable at the time, remains a major security victory* (Wolfsthal, 2023).

TT: *Рішення України відмовитися від ядерної спокуси, реальної на той час, залишається великою перемогою у сфері безпеки (ми добре пам'ятаємо який тиск і шантаж чинили тоді західні лідери на Україну, щоб вона відмовилася від ядерної зброї і передала її росії. США та союзники власними руками створили монстра на кордонах Європи. І все це через доктрину Кіссінджера "про співпрацю з росією" – iPress)* (iPress, 2023).

Gloss: *Ukraine's decision to resist nuclear temptation, real at the time, remains a major security victory (we still remember the pressure and blackmail that Western leaders exerted on Ukraine to give up its nuclear weapons and hand them over to russia. The United States and its allies have created a monster on Europe's borders with their own hands, all because of the Kissinger doctrine of 'cooperation with Russia.' – iPress.)*

The comment added in the TT in example 36 highlights the role of the West in creating a situation where Russia was able to invade Ukraine.

(37)**ST**: *If we do get to celebrate Ukraine's victory, we would do well to then re-energize U.S. efforts to reduce the role and utility of nuclear weapons everywhere* (Wolfsthal, 2023).

TT: *"Якщо ми святкуватимемо перемогу України, нам варто було б активізувати зусилля США, спрямовані на зменшення ролі і корисності ядерної зброї в усьому світі", – резюмує автор. Додамо, що це можна зробити тільки в умовах, коли Україна завдасть поразки росії* (iPress, 2023).

Gloss: *"If we celebrate Ukraine's victory, we should intensify U.S. efforts aimed at reducing the role and utility of nuclear weapons around the world," the author summarises. We would add that this can only be achieved if Ukraine defeats Russia.*

The sentence added in the TT in example 37 seems redundant as it simply restates the previous sentence's first part. This addition may be explained by its position as the concluding line of the TT: the translator likely intended to underscore the importance of defeating Russia for any progress in global security.

Finally, fearmongering strategies are modified in the TT. The first sentence of the original article ("The world is on the cusp of a dangerous new nuclear era...") is omitted, which tones down the fearmongering rhetoric in the TT. Additionally, the TT uses a different visual element. While the photograph in the original depicts a real mushroom cloud from a nuclear test above the Pacific Ocean, the picture in the TT is a collage featuring a contented-looking Putin rubbing his hands, the Doomsday Clock displaying ninety seconds to midnight, all set against a fiery backdrop with a mushroom cloud. As a result, in the TT the visual focus is shifted from the objective threat of nuclear war to Putin's role in the current perilous state of affairs.

In summary, Wolfsthal's article is reframed in the Ukrainian translation to highlight the responsibility of the West for creating the conditions that enabled Russia to invade Ukraine, question Wolfsthal's perspective on a protracted war as his personal opinion, reduce fearmongering language, and emphasise Putin's role in contributing to the current precarious state of global affairs.

7. Conclusion

The analysis has revealed the specific mechanisms through which Boris Johnson and Jon Wolfsthal construct their respective discourses on the Russo-Ukrainian war. Both authors depict the war as Russia's aggression against Ukraine. However, Johnson, who advocates prompt weapons supplies to Ukraine, highlights the existential significance of the war for Ukraine and the critical role of Ukrainian resistance in upholding international law. In contrast, Wolfsthal, who argues for gradual provision of weapons leading to a long war, places a strong emphasis on the threat to nuclear security while downplaying the significance of the war for Ukraine and its broader implications for the international security system.

Both authors utilise evaluative language to convey their ethical stance on the war. They both assert that it is morally right for the West to support Ukraine as it has fallen victim to aggression. Johnson goes further by using a wide range of evaluative devices to underscore Russia's brutality and condemn the delayed provision of Western weapons to Ukraine. Conversely, Wolfsthal primarily employs evaluative language to amplify fears of nuclear escalation.

Regarding dialogicality, Johnson structures his text as an implied dialogue with hypothetical opponents, using rhetorical questions, imperative sentences, irony, and first-person narration, whereas Wolfsthal references individuals holding institutional authority to validate his assertions. In particular, Wolfsthal cites the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists to substantiate his argument that the threat of a nuclear war is palpable and references the Biden administration to bolster his case for incremental weapon supplies to Ukraine and a long war as a way to prevent nuclear escalation.

Ukrainian media tend to frame opinion articles on the war by Western authors as representing either supportive allies or opposing voices within the broader Western discourse. Of the twelve media outlets that translated Boris Johnson's article, arguing for swift weapons supplies to Ukraine, four explicitly referred to him as "Ukraine's friend." Both Ukrainian translations of Johnson's article discussed in the paper highlight the ideas and representations that were central to the prevailing discourse within Ukrainian society at the specific point in time. These included the notion that Ukraine is fighting a war of independence, the call for Western countries to hasten their supply of arms to Ukraine, and the dismissal of Putin's nuclear rhetoric as mere bluff, among others.

Wolfsthal's article, which advocates a slower pace of weapons supplies to Ukraine and a prolonged war, was translated by a single peripheral internet media outlet and underwent significant reframing in its Ukrainian translation. The translation ironically labels Wolfsthal as a "guru of international politics," emphasises the West's responsibility for creating the conditions that facilitated Russia's invasion of Ukraine, underscores that Wolfsthal's argument for a protracted war is his personal opinion, mitigates fear-mongering language, and highlights Putin's role in contributing to the current fragile state of global affairs.

Considering the gatekeeping function of journalistic translation (Valdeón, 2022), one could tentatively infer that the contrasting treatment of Johnson's and Wolfsthal's articles indicates a focus of Ukrainian media on emphasising positive news from the West in the research period. This observation could lead to a tentative conclusion that one of the aims of journalistic translation in Ukraine at that time was to keep up the country's morale. **Further research** is required to substantiate or challenge this conclusion, as well as to investigate how this dynamic has evolved in subsequent periods.

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КОНСТРУЮВАННЯ РІЗНИХ ДИСКУРСІВ ПРО РОСІЙСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКУ ВІЙНУ: ЖУРНАЛІСТСЬКИЙ ПЕРЕКЛАД У ЧАС ВІЙНИ

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Анотація

У цьому дослідженні проаналізовано дві аналітичні статті із західних ЗМІ, які пропонують різні стратегії для Заходу в російсько-українській війні, із застосуванням критичного дискурс-аналізу. Аналіз зосереджений на трьох аспектах: репрезентаціях війни, оцінюванні та діалогічності. Проаналізовано також українські журналістські переклади цих статей. Виявлено, що в статті, яка аргументує необхідність озброєння України усіма необхідними засобами для швидкої перемоги над росією, війну зображено як боротьбу України за незалежність та як битву за збереження міжнародного права. Тим часом у статті, яка агітує за поступове постачання зброї і зтягування війни, війну переважно зображено як територіальну агресію, яка загрожує глобальній ядерній безпеці. Автор першої статті підкреслює брутальність російської армії та засуджує Захід за повільне постачання зброї Україні, використовуючи широкий спектр оцінних засобів. Натомість автор другої статті використовує оцінну лексику в основному для нагнітання страхів щодо ядерного ескалації. Що стосується діалогічності, то перший автор структурує текст як діалог із гіпотетичними опонентами, використовуючи риторичні запитання, наказові речення, іронію та мовлення від першої особи, тоді як інший автор посиляється в своїй аргументації на осіб, які мають інституційну владу. Різні ставлення до цих статей від українських ЗМІ, як на макро-, так і на мікрорівнях – що відображено у різній кількості перекладів (12 до 1) і в тому, як статті були переформатовані під час перекладу – виявляє гейткіпінг-функцію перекладу та припускає, що українські ЗМІ зосереджені на позитивних новинах із Заходу як на засобі підтримки морального духу країни.

Ключові слова: критичний дискурс-аналіз, російсько-українська війна, журналістський переклад, переформатування, гейткіпінг, ЗМІ.

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TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE AMERICAN HERO IN THE US MEDIA DISCOURSE

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Abstract

In the era of digital technologies, media has become a powerful tool of shaping worldview of people by means of sociocultural stereotypes. Formed in the process of evaluative categorization, sociocultural stereotypes represent simplified and conventional images of individuals and groups in media discourse. Affected by a range of factors, stereotypes undergo changes. Mass media play a particularly influential role in this process. The prominent figure of the US media landscape is ideologically charged stereotype of the American hero that embodies nationally significant ideas of freedom, individualism, and enterprise that lead to the accomplishment of a much-desired goal. I argue that the idealized cultural construct of the American hero, embodied in a sociocultural stereotype, is conceptualized through an image schema integrating foundational elements: PART–WHOLE–FORCE, SOURCE–PATH–GOAL. The WHOLE, representing the hero, comprises PARTS such as appearance, clothing, and behavior. FORCE signifies hero's strength necessary to achieve the GOAL. SOURCE arises from one's understanding, while the PATH involves overcoming adversities, culminating in success as the GOAL. This paper outlines transformations of the American hero stereotype in the US media discourse in diachronic perspective. Invariably virtuous, courageous, self-confident, purposeful, and hardworking, the American hero is inspirational and idealized image that takes on different forms due to changes of historical context. In different periods, the American hero is represented by a first settler, a cowboy, a ranger, a scientist. This stereotype functions as a model pattern for evaluating individuals and social groups. While the portrayal of the American hero in media discourse adapts to changing contexts, his image schema remains invariable.

Key words: *American hero, sociocultural stereotype, media discourse, diachronic perspective, cognitive-linguistics aspect.*

“...(h)ero, the leader, the saviour, is one who discovers a new way to greater certainty.”
(Jung, 1954/2014, p. 186)

1. Introduction

In view of their mental character, sociocultural stereotypes are acknowledged as verbalized cognitive structures that represent simplified and conventional images of individuals or groups (Ashmore & Del Boca, 2017; Beukeboom & Burgers, 2019; Tomasello, 2003, etc.). Sociocultural stereotypes are formed in the process of evaluative categorization, i.e., a mental process of distinguishing and assessing salient features of social phenomena, groups and individuals in accordance with cultural values and social standards. Stereotypes transform under the influence of



sociocultural and media factors (Lyubymova, 2023). Sociocultural factors that include ethical, aesthetic and behavioural standards, cultural dominants and ideological guidelines determine interpretation of societal experience of newly appeared groups. Media factors refer to journalists' work and the social networks leaders' activity that cause reinforcement of stereotypes or their reinterpretation.

In the era of widely spread digital technologies, media has become a powerful tool shaping worldview of people by means of sociocultural stereotypes. In media discourse, stereotyping is a complex process that depends on the information from different semiotic resources, social context, and personal experiences (Shevchenko, 2024). Media shape stereotypes through specific configuration of popular narrative formulas and categorical sociocultural schemas (Brylla, 2018, p. 264) that condition the way stereotypes are treated (Dyer, 2002, p. 1). As multimodal signs, sociocultural stereotypes are constructed by interacting visual and auditory channels. Visuals activate the accurate perception of sociocultural stereotypes through stimulation of external features (Bodenhausen & Macrae, 1998), such as clothing style, physical characteristics and kinetic features. Auditory channel represents stereotypes by certain sociolects or territorial dialects.

Sociocultural stereotypes are not only products of mass communication, but also the “main bet” in the ideological struggle for the opportunity to impose a certain worldview (Bourdieu, 1985). Though all sociocultural stereotypes are based on societal principles and beliefs, some of them are ideologically charged as they represent nationally significant ideas. Such is the American hero stereotype, which embodies outstanding abilities and deeds of a person who is a model for evaluating individuals and social groups. The American hero “is archetypal, a paradigm who bears the possibilities of life, courage, love – the commonplace which define our human lives” (Fishwick, 1985, p. 60). The hero saves people from troubles and encourages them to act boldly. Endowed with exceptional attributes, a hero “peaks above the mass that still clung to its collective fears, its beliefs, laws, and systems” (Jung, 1954/2014, p.175). He chooses his own way to achievements and victory irrespective of difficulties and dangers. As idealized personality, the hero has no flaws, only virtues, as “what we seek in visible human form is not man, but the superman” (Jung, 1954/2014, p. 178). He personifies not only the highest degree of courage, but “symbolizes the ideas, forms and forces that mould or grip the soul” (Jung, 1954/2014, p. 175). As a tool to raise the nation in the spirit of freedom, individualism, and enterprise, the American hero is maintained and strengthened by the US media. While the portrayal of the American hero in media discourse adapts to changing contexts, his essence remains invariable.

The *aim* of this paper is to present the results of a study on the transformations of the American hero stereotype in U.S. media discourse. The *objectives* are to outline the portrayal of this stereotype from a diachronic perspective and to identify the image schemas that structure the information associated with it. The language data came from ‘quality’ periodicals, popular entertaining magazines, movies, and commercials.

Theoretically, the study rests on the premise that stereotypes are results of socio-cultural reality interpretation that takes place within the scope of cognitive models by means of linguistic signs (Bartmiński, 2017; Lawton, 2016; Ross, 2019). Scientists acknowledge simplicity, conventionality and axiological character of stereotypes that are the integral part of natural language (Ashmore & Del Boca 2017; Schneider, 2004).

Media representation of sociocultural stereotypes reflect the causal connection between the categories of social world and societal cultural experience, values and norms that may vary. Sociocultural stereotypes manifest on the lexical-semantic level by words or collocations. A lexical unite that names a sociocultural stereotype is designated as stereotype nomen (Lyubymova, 2022a). On syntactic level, a stereotype is represented by propositional structures that implement subjective views on social groups and individuals. The evidence of stereotypes can also be traced in various linguistically bound phenomena: communicative style (Furkó, 2013; Deutschmann & Steinval, 2020), pragmatic predispositions (Lawton, 2016), phraseological units and proverbs (Shutova, 2015).

2. Methodology

Interpretive reconstruction of the stereotype's meaning is based on the hermeneutic canon that the language is the medium for understanding (Gadamer, 2004). Media text interpretation involves knowledge of the communicative background, i.e., the historical, cultural and ideological context, as well as the information transmission channel (Lyubymova, 2022b). Interpretative procedure lies in comprehending the meaning of the sociocultural stereotype, interpreting it in the cultural and historic context, and explaining the means of its media representation. Diachronic perspective of the research refers to interpretation of changes in media representation of the sociocultural stereotype from the time of its appearance till the present day.

The meaning of the American hero stereotype, that is verbalized and contextually construed in media discourse, is analysed in the framework of image schema theory. Image schemas organize human experience of “basic perceptual, motor-program, emotional, historical, social, and linguistic dimensions” (Johnson, 1987, p. xvi). They function as flexible templates for ordering information in different empirical contexts (Oakley, 2012). Comprising primary building blocks of cognition, image schemas may occur as compounds that overlay, detail, or refine the information (Kimmel, 2005). The compositionality of image schemas allows to depict a wide range of verbalized social phenomena.

3. Results and discussion

The American hero is self-confident and courageous, determined and hardworking. Embodying established ideas and basic cultural values, the American hero stereotype evinces stability of its features, though it takes on different forms due to changes of historical context. In different periods the American hero is represented by images of a first settler, a cowboy, a ranger, and a scientist.

3.1. Coming-to-be the national hero

Over the centuries, European cultures refined and idealized their heroic figures, elevating them into archetypes of ‘purity’ and virtue. In contrast, the American counterparts of these ancient heroes developed distinctive traits, reflecting the unique values and challenges of the New World (Boorstin, 2010, p. 327). Grandeur and dignity of British heroes contrasted with perseverance and naivety of the American popular heroes, who embodied the most important values of newly born nation. These individuals distrust authorities, pursue personal achievements and appreciate freedom above all.

The process of “hero-making” in the US media discourse began in the colonial period, when newspapers, almanacs and pamphlets “fertilized by vulgar humor and the popular imagination” (Boorstin, 2010, p. 330). Published in American colonies, “Astronomical Dairy and Almanack”, “Poor Richard Almanack”, “North American Almanack” taught people practicality and reliance on their own strength. Almanacs laid the foundations for cultural values and national features that crystallized into American hero. In his “Poor Richard’s Almanack”, B. Franklin portrays the hero, who protects the freedoms and wealth of people: “Your true hero fights to preserve, and not to destroy, the life liberties, and estates of his people” (Franklin, 2004, p. 154). B. Franklin outlined the basic cultural values that made up the American hero: individualism (“he may well win the race that runs by himself”), lust for victory (“Strive to be the best, and you may succeed”), diligence (“Industry pays Debts, while Despair increases them”) (Franklin, 2004, p. 139, 100).

The first a national popular hero of the colonial period was a simple and clumsy, but shrewd villager *Yankee Doodle* named after the song by the same name (example 1). Known by 1775, the British song mocked American fighter as both *a doodle*—a country hick, and a *dandy*—a conceited jerk (*Yankee Doodle*, n.d.):

- (1) *Yankee Doodle, keep it up
Yankee Doodle dandy
Mind the music and the step
And with the girls be handy.*

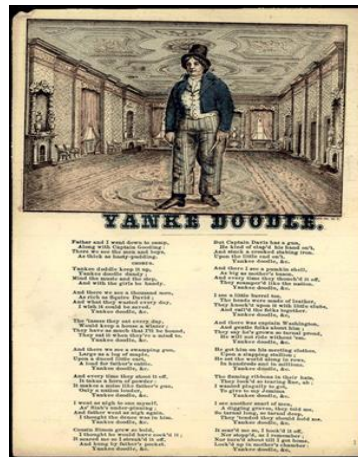


Fig.1 The text of *Yankee Doodle* (The Kennedy Center).

The newspaper “Hartford Courant” of 1775 reported the word *Yankee* originated from the name of the Indian tribe *Yankoo*s, which meant ‘invincible’ (Moore, 1858). The settlers of New England received the name *Yankee* after they conquered the tribe that traditionally gave its name to the conquerors. The history of this name was associated with the greatness of Americans and their hopes to be equal to Romans or ancient Englishmen (Moore, 1858).

In the revolutionary and post-revolutionary periods, the comic image of a rough, but witty and quirky *Brother Jonathan* replaced *Yankee Doodle*. The word *Brother* in the nomen indicates the equality of the Masonic address, while *Jonathan* is considered typical for a dweller of New England in the 17th and 18th centuries. Brother Jonathan was depicted as a man of low social status, wearing a long coat, colorful trousers, and a topper. A simple villager was a respected person in his community (Morgan, 1988, pp. 21–22). *Brother Jonathan*’s antagonist was an ethnic stereotype of brits – *John Bull*, caricatured in American newspapers as a fat and unpleasant man, richly dressed in a tailcoat, leggings, and a vest with a national flag of the United Kingdom.



Fig. 2. Brother Jonathan beats John Bull.

In the above-given satirical picture, *Brother Jonathan* overcomes *John Bull*. The text to the picture explains the fight: defeated and begging for mercy *John Bull* acknowledges superiority of his rival, *Brother Jonathan*, which states: "...we are an enterprising nation" (A boxing match, 1813). Resourceful and practical *Brother Jonathan* is an individualist, who can get out of difficult situations rewarded. These qualities became basic features of the American hero.

3.2. A first settler

Adventures in the wilderness, unexpected encounters with hostile tribes, and untamed animals—that was the life of the backwoodsmen, as the newspapers of the 18th century called the settlers of uncivilized territories. To survive in the wilderness, they had to be very self-reliant and independent:

(2) *men of Nature's own make, not starched into a precise formality, nor with souls and limbs alike fetched with artificial restraint, but with nerves and elastic frames, that do credit their 'raising', with quick feeling and buoyant hopes sparkling in their eyes; in a word, Backwoodsmen* (The Backwoods, 1837).

The metaphor "not starched into a precise formality" conveys the backwoodsmen's independence and dynamism by contrasting them with the rigid and inflexible qualities of dense, glossy fabric, symbolizing the structured lives of people in the civilized world. The phrase "buoyant hopes sparkling in their eyes" is emotionally elevated, reflecting the author's admiration for the backwoodsmen's vigor and determination to settle untamed lands.



Fig.3. The story about the life of backwoodsmen published in The Native American (The Backwoods, 1837).

The courage and commitment of the Americans who advanced to the southern borders exceeded what the world knew of British courage: "...the determined valor of the Western men and their offensive operations against overwhelming force surpass all that is recorded of British valor, either on Indian or European fields" (Buena Vista, 1848). The inhabitants of the borderland were portrayed as free, brave and entrepreneurial as the country in which they grew up.

The appearance of backwoodsmen, as described in newspapers, typically included buckskins, leggings, moccasins, Bowie knives, rifles, and flasks (Tuesday Evening, 1839).



Fig.4. Andriolli, M. E. American Pioneer Life (Drawings, n.d.).

Prototypical backwoodsman is Daniel Boone (1734 – 1820), whose media image is made up of exaggerated facts and outright fictitious details. His life credo was “Love and fear God, believe in Jesus Christ and do all the good to your neighbors and himself” (News of the Day, 1874). These were the moral principles that guided the first settlers, who are described as devout Protestants.

Synonymous with *backwoodsman* is the nomen *frontiersman*, which denotes a settler, who lived at the border of uncivilized territories: “The first settlers in this country were, when they first landed, frontier settlers. The frontier people...have done everything in their power to keep them in peace” (Review of the Session, 1795). Their deeds in defending the settlements from Indian attacks became the standard of valor: “armed and brave as frontiersmen” (An Old Timer, 1885).

Nomen *pioneer* of the first settler stereotype appeared in American newspapers in the mid-19th century. Originally it meant ‘infantryman’ that prepares roads for the main army (Klein, 2003, p. 563). ‘Hardy’ and ‘sturdy’ pioneers (The Cherokee Neutral Lands, 1869) did all possible to tame the wilderness and make the life comfortable on the new lands: “Let all emulate the sturdy American pioneers, who heeded not the perils of environment, but constituted the vanguard of civilization” (Don’t Strain Yourself, 1897). The call to ‘emulate the sturdy American pioneers’ indicates the role model of the first settlers.

In the cinematic discourse, pioneers are protagonists of westerns. They live by code of honor and their vision of justice was enacted by weapon. The credits of the silent film “The Covered Wagon” (1923) describe the heroism of American pioneers that carried out a noble mission to spread civilization westward:

(3) *The blood of America is the blood of pioneers – the blood of lion-hearted men and women who carved a splendid civilization out of an uncharted wilderness. With dauntless courage, facing unknown perils, the men and women of the 'forties flung the boundaries of the nation westward, and still westward, beyond the Mississippi, beyond the prairies, beyond the Rockies, – until they bounded the United States of America with two Oceans* (Cruz, 1923).

In example 3 above, the American hero is a gender-neutral personality described as “*lion-hearted men and women*”. Women shared all the hardships of the pioneers' lives in their advancement westward. The metaphor “*carved a splendid civilization out of an uncharted wilderness*” shows the process of creating the nation by pioneers as compared to stone carving. Pioneers exhibit the highly valued quality of the American hero—“*dauntless courage*”.

3.3. An American cowboy

The proximity of the United States to Mexico conditioned livestock farming practices. The workers, who herd and tend cattle were named *cowboys*, *punchers* or *cowpokes*, but only the word *cowboy* functions as the nomen of the American hero stereotype as it got additional meaning of a freedom-loving, bold and enduring personality, known throughout the country.

Cowboys not only raised and drove cattle, but also helped the military to control new territories: “American cowboys came to the aid of United States troopers” (American Cowboys, 1916). In the newspapers, they were estimated as rough, brave, big-hearted, having strict ideas of honor, ready to share their last crust with you (Real Live Cowboys, 1885). Individualism and ruggedness, a fierce pride in his land (Creek, 1960) were stated as the main characteristics of a cowboy.

Commercials exploit the stereotype of a cowboy for spreading the information about the products and services and compelling the desire to become a real cowboy, a leader in their surroundings: “If you wanna be the king of cowboys in your corral, eat plenty of Post Grape Nut Flakes” (Rogers, 1952).

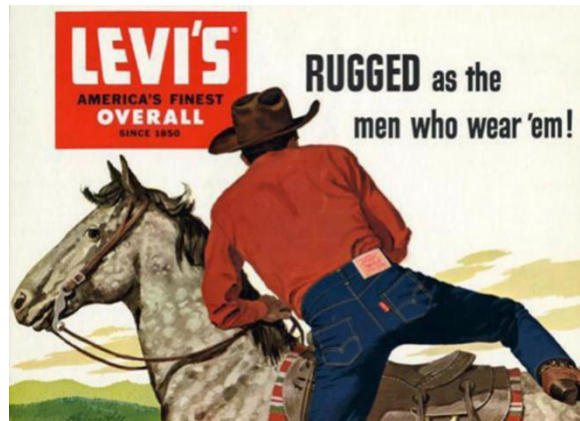


Fig.5. The image of a cowboy in the mid-20th-century advertisement of jeans (Levi's, n.d.).

Visual attributes of cowboys, i.e., blue jeans, denim work shirts, are as rugged as a cowboy, who wears them (Fig.5). Worn scuffed boots and sweat-stained Stetson hats (Creek, 1960) signify the hard work of a cowboy.

His solitude, courage, and masculine strength have been celebrated in numerous Hollywood films (“Stagecoach”, 1939; “The Searchers”, 1956; “Lonesome Dove”, 1989; “Dances with Wolves”, 1990) that portray exploits of cowboys and teach the American way of life. In cinematic discourse of the 20th century, a cowboy looks a strong man in denim and a Stetson hat, speaking with a Southern accent. He skilfully shoots and fights enemies, defending honor and law. The cowboy from the film “Dodge City” (1939) is named ‘a trail boss’ that conveys the significance of the cowboy in the community, in which he establishes justice: “...a trail boss has sometimes got to take the law into his hands” (Curtiz, 1939). The society demands a hero that respects law and can defend it: “What Dodge City needs is a man with a sense of public pride...and the courage to back it up by shooting it out with men of equal skill” (Curtiz, 1939). An American cowboy is a patriot, as he has ‘a sense of public pride’.

In cinematic discourse of the turn of the 21st century, a cowboy stereotype acquires various gender and racial features, not changing its positive characteristics, e.g., a cowgirl who is a good shot and wins the fight against criminals in “The Quick and the Dead” (1995), gay cowboys in “Brokeback Mountain” (2005), African American cowboys in “Concrete Cowboy” (2020).

The American conservative magazine “The Federalist” describes the cowboy as the central hero of the American West and one of the founding heroes of American culture:

- (4) *The traditional cowboy, who is much more than just a “white man in a wide-brimmed hat... the traditional, stereotypical cowboy is, above all, a cultural hero. He (or she) is in fact the central hero figure of the American West and one of the foundational heroes of American culture as a whole (Grewell, 2018).*

The stereotype of a cowboy embodies America's belief in courage, endurance and willpower, integrity and ingenuity of Americans.

3.4. A ranger / military

Originated from French, the word *ranger* appeared in American culture in the period of the French and Indian Wars. The first and most famous organization of Texas Rangers was formed in 1823. Since the very beginning of the Ranger movement, the soldier who defended the borders of Texas has symbolized strong individualism, courage, and honesty.

An example of the American ranger hero is Walker (portrayed by Chuck Norris), the central character in the television series *Walker, Texas Ranger* (1993–2001). The series' introduction represents a man in a waterproof raincoat and a wide-brimmed Texas hat with a rifle in his hand and a ranger badge.



Fig.6. Chuck Norris as a member of the Texas Ranger Division in the series “Walker, Texas Ranger”.

Accompanying song asserts the inevitability of punishment from the ranger for breaking the law:

(5) *In the eyes of a Ranger
The unsuspecting stranger
Had better know the truth
Of wrong from right
'cause the eyes
Of the Ranger
Are upon you
Any wrong you do
He's gonna see
When you're in Texas
Look behind you (Wilder, 1994).*

The lyrics of the song are enhanced by the backdrop of a sunset, against which the audience observes the watchful gaze of a Texas Ranger. Walker explains his wish to become a ranger as his life goal to oppose injustice: “You know why I became a ranger? I mean, the real reason is I was hoping I could put a stop to this kind of thing” (Katzman et al., 1994).

Modesty and endurance are key traits of the American hero, often epitomized in the image of the military figure. In cinematic discourse, the American hero is often depicted as a brave warrior who saves the United States—and the entire world—from various disasters, such as environmental catastrophes (“The Day After Tomorrow”, 2004), alien invasions (“Independence Day”, 1996,

2016), and terrorist threats (“Iron Man”, 2008), as well as exploring new frontiers in space. An example of such a hero is Russell Casse in “Independence Day” (1996, 2016), who sacrifices his life to save humanity. A former Vietnam War pilot, he heroically turns his warplane against the alien invaders. When referred to as a ‘lifesaver,’ he humbly replies, “I’ve got to” and his rallying cry, “We’re not done yet! Gentlemen, let’s plough the road!” (Emmerich, 1996) embodies faith in victory and the resolve to overcome obstacles.

3.5. A scientist

In the 21st century, the image of a less physically strong, but shrewd, educated and inventive modern American hero emerges. In cinematic discourse, scientists are portrayed as individuals of diverse ages and genders, embodying resilience and a fervent dedication to science. Unfazed by the danger, they relentlessly focus on their task. High moral standards of American scientists are conveyed by the pleonasm ‘virtuous hero’ (Johnson, 2017). The metaphor ‘voices of virtue’ (Fahy, 2014) illustrates the significant influence that scientists exert on humanity, as their insights and opinions are regarded as manifestations of rational thought. Their knowledge and expertise are further encapsulated in the metaphor ‘knowledge-nuggets’ (Sauer, 2014), which emphasizes the value of their erudition for the benefit of humanity.

Hollywood films feature scientists who are able to solve various problems from space travel and alien invasion to geological or biological hazards (“Sunshine”, 2007; “Tornado Valley”, 2009; “Contagion”, 2011; “Arrival”, 2016). For example, in the film “Contagion” heroic scientists save the world from a dangerous virus that starts in Hong Kong. Only scientists, who develop a rapid action plan, can prevent the unknown threat: “We’re isolating the sick and quarantining those who we believe were exposed” (Soderbergh, 2011).



Fig.7. The scene from “Contagion”.

Scientists realize the danger, but decisively test the vaccine against the virus on themselves: “I’d rather the story be that we overreact...than that many people lost their lives because we didn’t do enough” (Soderbergh, 2011). Demonstrating courage, bravery and selflessness, the team of like-minded people overcomes the virus.

Thus, at the beginning of the 20th century, the American hero was characterized as an individualist, embodying personal freedom and independence while enduring the hardships of colonizing uncharted territories. In contrast, by the 21st century, amid the context of modern global challenges, the American hero exemplifies a team spirit, which helps to solve problems of any complexity.

4. Conclusion

The media stereotype of the American hero embodies the exceptional abilities and actions of an individual who serves as a benchmark for evaluating personal and social ideals. An American hero achieves cherished dreams through decisive action. In contemporary media discourse, the American hero is no longer confined to the image of a white Protestant but may represent any faith or race being characterized by strength, courage, self-confidence, determination, and hard work. The formation of the American hero stereotype began in the 18th century with the emergence of national popular heroes, whose representations have evolved due to changes of historical context.

The idealized cultural experience, embodied in the sociocultural stereotype of the American hero, is structured as an image schema, which integrates such basic elements as PART–WHOLE–FORCE, SOURCE–PATH–GOAL. WHOLE, i.e., a hero, consists of PARTS appearance, clothing, manners, etc. The basic element FORCE is physical and/or moral strength, endurance that ensure achievement of GOAL. SOURCE is the understanding of the needs of the society and one's own. The hero's PATH is the struggle against nature and enemies, which ends with the GOAL – the achievement of the desired success. Changes in the integrated image schema of the American hero stereotype concern the information presented in the basic element PARTS. In the public consciousness, the stereotype of the American hero functions as a prototype for the stereotyping of social groups and individuals.

Further research could examine the American hero stereotype as a tool for constructing persuasive rhetoric in the speeches of politicians and influential public figures.

Declaration of competing interest

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ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЇ АМЕРИКАНСЬКОГО ГЕРОЯ В МЕДІЙНОМУ ДИСКУРСІ США

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Анотація

В епоху цифрових технологій ЗМІ стали потужним інструментом формування світогляду людей за допомогою соціокультурних стереотипів. Сформовані в процесі оціночної категоризації, соціокультурні стереотипи є спрощеними та умовними образами індивідів і соціальних груп у медійному дискурсі. Під впливом низки чинників стереотипи зазнають змін. Особливо впливову роль у цьому процесі відіграють засоби масової інформації. Провідною фігурою американського медіа простору є ідеологічно забарвлений стереотип американського героя, який уособлює національно значущі ідеї свободи, індивідуалізму та підприємливості, що ведуть до досягнення омріяної мети. Ідеалізований культурний конструкт американського героя, втілений у соціокультурному стереотипі, концептуалізується через образ-схему, яка об'єднує основні елементи: ЧАСТИНА–ЦІЛЕ–СИЛА, ДЖЕРЕЛО–ШЛЯХ–МЕТА. ЦІЛЕ, що представляє героя, складається з таких ЧАСТИН, як зовнішність, одяг і поведінка. СИЛА означає силу героя, необхідну для досягнення МЕТИ. ДЖЕРЕЛО виникає з розуміння людини, тоді як ШЛЯХ передбачає подолання труднощів, кульмінацією якого стає успіх як ЦІЛЬ. У статті простежено трансформації стереотипу американського героя в медіадискурсі в діахронічній перспективі. Незмінно добродісний, мужній, впевнений у собі, цілеспрямований і працьовитий американський герой є надихаючим та ідеалізованим образом, який набуває різних форм у зв'язку зі зміною історичного контексту його репрезентації. У різні періоди американський герой набуває різних образних форм: першопоселенця, ковбоя, рейнджера, науковця. Цей стереотип функціонує як зразок для оцінювання індивідів та соціальних груп. Незважаючи на те, що образна форма американського героя в медійному дискурсі змінюється відповідно до змін історико-культурного контекста, образ-схема, яка структурує інформацію про цей стереотип залишається незмінною.

Ключові слова: американський герой; соціокультурний стереотип; медійний дискурс; діахронічна перспектива; лінгвокогнітивний аспект.

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VISUALS AND TEXT IN PHARMACEUTICAL ADVERTISING: A MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS

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Abstract

This article deals with the multimodality in modern English-language advertising. The influence of advertising on consumers has been a subject of many investigations among linguists. In this present paper, I build on the theoretical and practical data gained by researchers who studied virtual influencers in multimodal advertising, discussed the unique characteristics of the suggestion realization strategies in political advertising, evaluated advertisement discourse influence formula in terms of positive and negative orientation of the advertisement, investigated various functions of different contact languages in advertising, the phenomenon of multimodality in the Polish advertising of pharmaceutical products with the audio-visual spots. Scholars also used a pragmatic approach to advertisements in Britain and Japan and conducted a multimodal discourse analysis of malaria drugs advertisement. However, the role of multimodality in the context of pharmaceutical advertising remains understudied. Advertised pharmaceutical products have an impact on human consciousness. Misleading or inaccurate information can seriously affect consumers, including adverse health outcomes. The unique nature of pharmaceutical advertising makes pharmaceutical advertising different from other types of advertising, like political or consumer advertising. The material for this study consists of 500 samples in both paper and electronic formats. I hypothesize that the multimodal character of pharmaceutical advertising, incorporating both verbal and non-verbal elements, significantly enhances its persuasive impact by influencing consumer emotions and encouraging them to select specific pharmaceuticals. To prove this hypothesis, I identified patterns of interaction between verbal and non-verbal components through the prism of words, images, signs, and symbols. In this research, a multimodal approach allowed to uncover both the intended meanings and the subtle manipulation tactics used in pharmaceutical advertising.

Keywords: *advertising, advertising text, multimodal text, multimodality, pharmaceuticals, pragmatics.*

1. Introduction

Throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, defining the concept of advertising, its structure, and functions was among the scientific interests of many researchers. At the beginning of the 20th century, advertising was defined as a medium through which one mind seeks to influence another (Le Roy, 1921, p. 6), special pleading (Rorty, 1934, p.12), etc. Advertising is a complex issue with numerous facets that has been attracting significant attention from scientists worldwide. Scholars focus on a variety of characteristics of advertising, including gender, structure, stylistic, cognitive, sociolinguistic, cross-cultural, and onomastic elements. In the late 20th century, advertising researchers described advertising as the structured and composed nonperson communication of

information, usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature, about products (goods, services, and ideas) by identified sponsors through various media (Arens, 1999, p.7). Beyond traditional media such as newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, outdoor advertising (billboards, posters, flyers, etc.), some areas where advertising is also used appeared. There is advertising in social media – Meta, Instagram, TikTok, etc., on websites, advertising within mobile applications.

Advertising in printed form is a type of communication that informs the audience about goods or services in an appealing manner using words or images. Three essential elements form the foundation of pharmaceutical advertising. First, it reflects, to some extent, human civilization's perspectives on health-related issues. Secondly, the link between pharmaceuticals, science and medicine creates an associative relationship between advertising and scientific language. Thirdly, the promotion of medicines differs from that of consumer items because pharmaceutical advertising is associated with the concepts of life and health, which have always been among the most significant to people.

On the one hand, advertising assists customers in selecting wisely from the range of options available to them. On the other hand, persuasive strategies are used in pharmaceutical advertising to convey to potential buyers what medication is best for them. It was stated in the earliest guides on producing successful advertising that drawing the consumer's attention is the first step toward persuading them to purchase the goods. AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) is a well-known formula that later reflected the role of advertising (Vilanilam & Varghese, 2004, p. 11). AIDA states that advertising should draw the recipient's attention, pique their interest in the advertised good or service, and motivate them to buy it.

Printed advertising conveys messages through semiotic complexes. Belova (2021, p. 15) states that "lately verbal and semiotic acrobatics in advertising is not limited to persuasion, an inherent characteristic of ads; it is used to provoke admiration, amazement, wonderment, so called wow effect." It is worth mentioning that because of the lack of a unified approach to the definition of advertising, there is no generally accepted opinion on the structure and number of advertising text components. There are a lot of approaches to the number of the main components of the advertising text (Blakeman, 2004, pp. 52-58; Shah, 2010, p. 230). In some instances of pharmaceutical advertising, the number of components may be different. In certain situations of pharmaceutical advertising, a concise message can be conveyed effectively through just a headline and illustrations, without any additional components (Ward, 1999, p.12). In my research, I follow Edelman (2009, p.141) who considers such components of advertising text as the headline, illustration, body copy (main text), slogan, product name, and standing details. As Baudrillard (1998) claims,

Every image and every advertisement imposes a consensus between all the individuals potentially called upon to decipher it, that is to say, called on, by decoding the message, to subscribe automatically to the code in which it has been couched.

The primary goal of pharmaceutical advertising is to attract attention and create demand for advertised objects; according to Cook (1992, p.177), the advertising seeks to achieve contact between reality and fiction, sending and receiving, characters and consumer, fantasy and fact, for the passage of product to be feasible. I agree with Jabbar (2022, p. 40) that one of the goals of pharmaceutical manufacturing companies is to design a distinctive logo, type and color of font, and a prominent size, as well as the use of colors as a background for the brochure to be prominent, so that the brochure appears in a distinctive marketing way that persuades the customers and attracts their attention to the product.

In a world saturated with pharmaceutical advertising messages, multimodal texts help a pharmaceutical company stand out from the competition. Because of this, the need to stimulate attention to the product leads to multimodal advertising, and by engaging multiple senses, advertisers create a stronger impact on the recipient.

The object of multimodal research becomes a variety of discursive spheres, such as English advertising texts (Zhang, 2017; Bezuhla, 2019), English-language comics (Ivasyshyn, 2018), virtual influencers in multimodal advertising (Belova, 2021), social media (Shevchenko, 2023),

picture books for children (Bieliekhova & Tsapiv, 2019), short fiction (Vorobyova & Lunyova, 2020), multimodal construction of negative emotions in film (Krysanova & Shevchenko, 2021), political multimodal media texts (Shevchenko, 2024), the phenomenon of multimodality in the Polish advertising of pharmaceutical products with the audio-visual spots is discussed (Szwed, 2020), a multimodal discourse analysis of malaria drugs advertisement (Olowu & Akinkurolere, 2015), etc. According to Kress (2001, p.20), multimodality highlights that meaning is not derived from a single mode in isolation but from the complex interplay of various modes working in concert. Although advertising researchers have extensively researched multiple facets of advertising (Belova, 2021; Bezuhla, 2019; Cook, 1992; Kovalevska, 2020; Kutuza, 2014; Lee & Johnson, 2005; Leech, 1966; Messaris, 1997; Piller, 2003; Tanaka, 1994, etc.), there remain under-researched aspects, such as the multimodal characteristics of pharmaceutical advertising.

The objective of this study is to analyze pharmaceutical advertising texts in English through the lens of multimodality. To achieve this goal, I have outlined the following tasks: to find out the verbal and non-verbal components of the printed English-language pharmaceutical advertising; to identify the functions of verbal and non-verbal components of the pharmaceutical advertising. The research *hypothesizes* that the multimodal character of pharmaceutical advertising, incorporating both verbal and non-verbal elements, significantly enhances its persuasive impact by influencing consumer emotions and encouraging them to select specific pharmaceuticals. Previous investigations into the genres of pharmaceutical advertising (Nasakina, 2018) and the functions of proper names within this context (Nasakina, 2020) inspired the hypothesis that the multimodal nature of pharmaceutical advertising, combining verbal and non-verbal elements, significantly contributes to its persuasive effectiveness by influencing consumer emotions and encouraging the selection of specific pharmaceuticals. Effective pharmaceutical advertising often leverages emotional appeals to resonate with consumers' feelings, such as happiness or relief from pain. Visual techniques can significantly enhance the persuasive power of the advertisements, making them more memorable and impactful. According to advertising researchers, visual images can have three main functions in an advertisement: they can arouse feelings by making a natural person or object appear more natural; they can act as photographic evidence that something actually happened; and they can create an implicit connection between the product being sold and other images (Messaris, 1997, p.vii).

The object of this research is the printed pharmaceutical advertising texts.

The subject of this research is the verbal and non-verbal means of meaning making in multimodal—verbal and pictorial—texts of advertisement.

Advertising belongs to mass media multimodal texts. Kress (2001, p. 4) defines multimodal texts as making meaning in multiple articulations. Zhang (2017, p. 171) points out that “a variety of modes are often used in the advertising strategy,” but “the majority of information is still transmitted in language mode and image mode.” According to Nikiforova et al. (2023, p. 87), “the multimodal approach to text and illustration investigates them as a combination of reciprocally connected modes.” The target audience for pharmaceutical advertising typically does not evaluate verbal and non-verbal elements independently. As a result, copywriters purposefully integrate these components to effectively capture the audience’s attention.

Printed pharmaceutical advertising demonstrates multimodality, characterized by the integration of visual elements—including images, colors, and graphic techniques—with verbal (textual) components. This study investigates the synergistic interplay between verbal and non-verbal elements in pharmaceutical advertising, analyzing how these components capture audience attention and influence product selection.

2. Method and data

Pharmaceutical advertising frequently employs emotionally charged language to accentuate the positive attributes of medications. This language suggests that the product can alleviate health concerns by focusing on consumer anxieties and aspirations.

Pharmaceutical advertising text is characterized by semantic precision. Conversely, images in advertising can create associative links in the minds of consumers, possess persuasive power, and enhance a manipulative effect by appealing to the consumer's perception at a subconscious level. Furthermore, visual elements can strengthen attention to the written message and improve memorability. Images add dynamism to English-language advertising messages, rendering them more engaging for consumers.

Additionally, they introduce ambiguity into the overall meaning of the advertisement, often enhancing consumer interest. The multimodal advertising format enables advertisers to utilize diverse persuasive strategies, and the interplay between verbal and visual components within advertisements is instrumental to their compelling efficacy.

The methodological foundation of this research is a set of the following methods and techniques: the continuous sampling method, general scientific methods of systematization, analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction techniques, and the descriptive method. Among the unique linguistic methods, multimodal analysis and semiotic and pragmatic approaches are involved.

The multimodal approach assumes that today, any analysis can no longer rely only or mainly on language if it is aimed at interpreting the meaning of a text or a communicative event. According to Barthes (1988, p. 177), the more duplicity an advertising sentence contains, or, to avoid a contradiction in terms, the more multiple it is, the better it fulfills its function as a connoted message.

The socio-philosophical paradigm conceptualizes advertising as both a form of mass communication and a process of meaning transmission. The cultural manifestation of these meanings is a myth, rooted in the archetypes proposed by Jung (1991). The works of Barthes (1957), McLuhan (2013), and Baudrillard (1996) form the theoretical foundation for this analysis. Any advertising creates a universe of signs without referents, which form a unique semiotic matrix. As Baudrillard (1998, p.88) claims,

Advertising as a whole has no meaning. It merely conveys significations. Its significations (and the behaviors they call forth) are never personal: they are all differential; they are all marginal and combinatorial (highlighting – J.B.).

In this study, I posit that advertising, as a component of social semiotics, represents a significant aspect of a broader semiotic system. According to McLuhan (2013), the steady trend in advertising is to manifest the product as an integral part of significant social purposes and processes. Within the pragmatic aspect, advertisement is considered an action that connects communicants—the author and the potential buyer. According to the researchers, nowadays, a cognitive-pragmatic approach satisfies the need of linguistics to complement the cognitive approach with pragmatic and socio-cultural dimensions of inquiry (Shevchenko & Gutorov, 2019, p.302). The pragmatic focus of the advertising text is the need to encourage the addressee to take some kind of response, which may consist of changing the attitude towards the subject of the advertisement. According to Batsevych (2010, p. 41), in the focus of pragmatic analysis there are such important concepts of communication as strategies and tactics of communication, evaluative (axiological) aspects of human interaction, laws, rules, and conventions of communication, etc. The addressee defines communicative goals, tasks, and types of speech behavior. In turn, the addressee decodes the received message, interprets explicitly and implicitly expressed thoughts. I agree with Shevchenko and Gutorov (2019) that pragmatics is cognitive by nature. The process of interpreting the advertising text by the addressee becomes intrinsically linked to the addressee's subsequent behavior, shaped by their perception of the advertising message.

The semiotic method of analysis is utilized to uncover the sign-based nature of advertising texts and to identify the combination of verbal and non-verbal means within the framework of pharmaceutical advertising. The pragmatic method of analysis is utilized to single out the strategies and tactics of the language of pharmaceutical advertising in diverse communicative contexts.

In his seminal book “Introducing Social Semiotics”, van Leeuwen (2005) discusses various semiotic resources:

1. Images and photographs serve as powerful tools in advertising, conveying emotions and messages quickly. They can depict lifestyles, ideals, or aspirations, influencing consumer perceptions and desires. According to van Leeuwen (2005, p. 38), two elements of the content of images are singled out as especially important connotators: poses and objects.

2. Colors can evoke emotions and set the tone of an advertisement. Different colors are associated with various meanings, which can affect consumer behavior and brand perception. For example, red often symbolizes passion or danger, while blue can represent calmness or trust. Van Leeuwen (2005, p. 61) claims that in contemporary Western consumer society color also signifies identities.

3. The choice of words, typography, and text arrangement contribute significantly to the overall message. Advertisers often use persuasive language to evoke particular feelings from recipients. The specific words used in an advertisement can influence its meaning. For example, using of positive or negative vocabulary can affect the emotional impact of the message.

4. The direction of a person’s gaze in an image can determine the relationship between the viewer and the subject. Direct gaze can create a connection or confrontation, while averted gaze can suggest privacy or contemplation.

5. The arrangement of elements within an image can influence its meaning. For instance, a central placement might suggest importance, while a diagonal composition can create a sense of movement or dynamism. How elements are arranged within an advertisement affects how viewers interpret the message. A well-composed layout can attract audience attention.

In pharmaceutical advertising, I study how semiotic resources create compelling messages that resonate with the target audience and achieve desired outcomes. This study was carried out in several stages.

The first stage consists of forming of the corpus of research materials using the continuous sampling method. I used the descriptive method for the purpose of a systematic inventory of advertising units and explaining the peculiarities of their structure and functioning. I examined how visual and textual elements work together to convey messages and influence consumer perceptions. After that I compared different advertising campaigns across various media (print, digital) to identify successful strategies. This provided insights into effective practices in pharmaceutical advertising. I defined the research questions and stated the hypothesis. I used general scientific methods of systematization to categorize the various elements of pharmaceutical advertising, such as visual and graphic components (images, colors, etc.), textual elements (headlines, body copy, etc.), and regulatory compliance aspects.

In the second stage, the inductive method was employed to collect and categorize samples of pharmaceutical advertising. By analyzing these samples, I identified patterns and trends in the use of multimodal elements. Then the deductive method was applied to generalize these findings and establish broader theoretical principles regarding the effectiveness of multimodal pharmaceutical advertising.

In the third stage, I identified key semiotic resources as well as pragmatic strategies and tactics within advertising texts. Using the insights derived from my research, I proposed theoretical frameworks to explain how multimodal elements enhance the effectiveness of pharmaceutical advertising. I concluded by evaluating the efficacy of multimodal pharmaceutical advertising and its influence on consumer behavior.

I took *the material for the research* from the printed advertising texts of pharmaceuticals in the form of booklets, catalogs, prospectuses, and from Internet sites. 500 examples of advertising

were collected through continuous sampling. In this paper, I *aim* to address several key *research questions*: What are the linguistic and semiotic choices employed by different pharmaceutical companies to make their messages more effective? How does the multimodal nature of pharmaceutical advertising contribute to its persuasive power? What specific emotional responses are targeted by multimodal pharmaceutical advertising?

3. Results and discussion

The pharmaceutical market has always been a vital part of the global economy due to stable demand and the demand for pharmaceutical products. Marketing experts need to develop innovative advertising methods to draw attention to the pharmaceutical products in the face of intense competition. That's why advertising strategies are founded on strong emotional and are rational levels and carried out with the aid of visually appealing and imaginative advertising. The main visual elements of the non-verbal part of pharmaceutical advertising often become images of people, animals, pharmaceutical products, and nature. In this research, I analyzed verbal means of pharmaceutical advertising at the phonetic, grammatical, and lexical levels in their close connection with the non-verbal elements (images, graphic and color components, illustrations).

In the sample below (Fig.1), the verbal mode in *Lipitor* advertising effectively presents it as a medication designed to reduce the risk of heart attacks. The accompanying imagery enhances the verbal message, aiding in interpreting of the advertisement's intent. The central image of a man captures the viewer's attention, with his name displayed in large font to intrigue the audience. Additionally, photography is strategically used to portray a typical consumer of the medication, which is why the place where he lives and the date of the heart attack are mentioned. The dark color palette serves as a crucial element, creating a somber backdrop that underscores the severe health implications associated with heart disease (Fig.1).



Fig.1. Lipitor advertising (Vecchione, (2008).

Attention to the advertising is attracted by the man's close-up and frontal positions in the advertising, which facilitate eye contact. With the help of the semiotic heterogeneity of advertising texts, where information is encoded through various semiotic resources, a manipulative effect is exerted on the addressee.

3.1. Phonetic and graphic level

At the phonetic level, advertising texts frequently employ diverse sound repetition techniques. I identified the strategic use of rhyme, alliteration and assonance **in the analyzed advertisements**. The text of the multivitamin advertising in Figure 2 is built in the rhyme: "*Sleep. Eat. Repeat*". These three words attract attention because they are written with the help of a big font. In the advertisement, **an image of the advertised pharmaceuticals compensates** the lack of photos of potential consumer. Within the advertisement, the photo of vitamins (a non-verbal component) is positioned in the foreground on the right, emphasizing their primary role as the focal point of the visual composition of the advertising message.



Fig.2. Swisse Multivitamins (Green, 2024).

Alliteration and assonance are often used in the advertising texts. In the following sample, there is both alliteration (the repetition of phoneme *d*) and assonance (the repetition of phoneme *I*) (Fig. 3).



Fig.3. Vitamin D advertising (McQuigge, 2016).

I agree with Shevchenko (2022, p.71) that “in a multimodal narrative, different modes are not inherently the main or subsidiary (verbal/visual/audial); their salience is contextual”. For example, in Figure 3, both verbal and non-verbal components—image, graphical means, and color—matter. Rightly selected color schemes and color contrasts add dynamism to this advertising message. Furthermore, images of animals create a favorable background, thereby forming a positive attitude towards vitamin D. Dog in pharmaceutical advertising (Fig.3) captures attention quickly and draws viewers in, making them more likely to remember the advertisement. Productive techniques for attracting attention include capitalization, highlighting words with a different font, color, or size. To attract attention, the letters are often italicized to mimic handwritten text, creating a sense of authenticity and trust. In addition, the question mark in this advertising is a powerful rhetorical tool, inviting the audience to participate actively in the discourse and consider the implications of the posed inquiry (“*who knew I needed to do the D?*”).

The important linguistic means that draws readers’ attention to the advertisement is the repetition of the same or similar sound combinations, morphemes, words, etc. These texts are easily remembered, for example, the repetition of the word *smart* in the vaccine advertising (Fig.4).

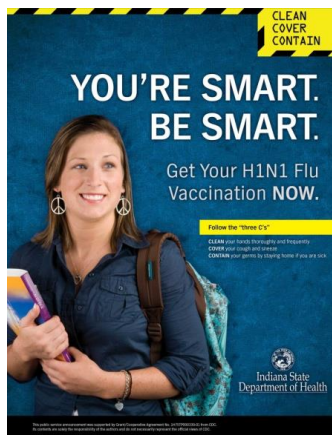


Fig.4.H1N1 Flu vaccination advertising (H1N1 Immunization, n.d.).

Additionally, the persuasive strategy of addressing the consumer is exemplified by the imperative phrase “*Get Your H1N1 Flu vaccination NOW*”. The above-mentioned sample contains keywords that the advertiser emphasizes, which are printed in a large font. As it was mentioned earlier, graphic symbols in the language of advertising can also include punctuation marks. The exclamation mark in the slogan (“*More Vitamins D` For Strong Bones!*”) attracts the recipient’s attention, emphasizing strengthening bones that is an important characteristic of vitamins (Fig.5). Such punctuation marks as a question mark and an exclamation mark provide the function of expressive reinforcement of the significance of the content, so they are often used in advertising texts. They give the language of advertising the characteristics of oral speech, lively dialogue, casual, friendly communication of the advertiser and the reader.

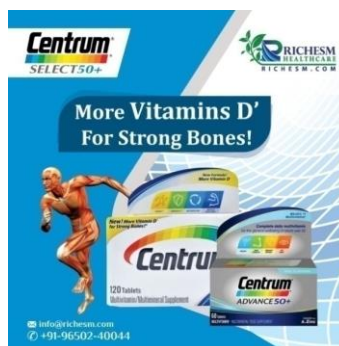


Fig.5. Centrum advertising (What Is Centrum Tablet, 2022).

In advertisements, both upper- and lowercase letters can be highlighted in bold to serve as keywords.

Consequently, the phonetic and graphic elements, as integral components of the multimodal composition, effectively capture the audience’s attention to pharmaceutical advertising.

3.2. Grammatical level

Texts of pharmaceutical advertising are characterized by the predominance of adjectives with a positive connotation, numerals, and pronouns.

Derkachova and Lazebna (2021, p. 130) claim that “in video advertising, significant importance is given to first- and second-person pronouns, creating the effect of a dialogue between the manufacturer and the potential buyer” (*translation is mine – S.N.*). I observe the same in printed pharmaceutical advertising. For example, the pronoun *I* in the text “*I am stronger than diabetes*” allows to relate to the image of a man in the advertising, and the adjective *stronger* in the comparative form expresses the determination to fight the disease (Fig.6).

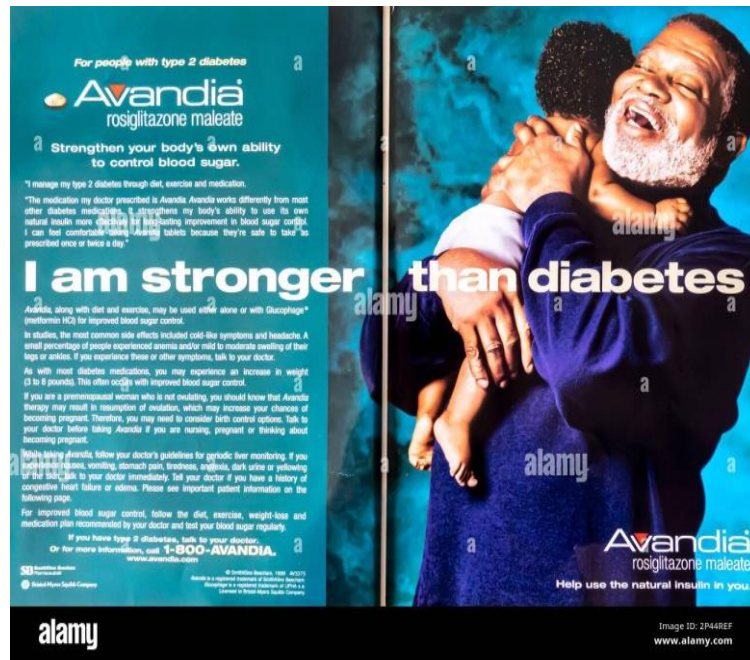


Fig.6. Avandia advertising (Avandia, n.d.).

Numerals in pharmaceutical advertising enhance the persuasiveness of advertising messages by providing concrete, quantifiable information. The use of specific numbers makes the advertising message more believable, leading to increased audience trust. Advertisers use numerals to highlight the benefits of pharmaceuticals (Fig.7) and make the advertising more appealing to potential customers. The fact that the numerals are grounded in scientific research adds to the impact of advertising.

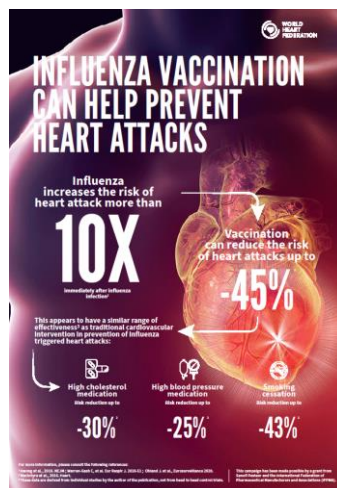


Fig.7. Influenza vaccination advertising (Influenza vaccination, n.d.).

The alarming intonation in this advertising instills a feeling of anxiety in the addressee with the help of the different modes (the image of the heart on the background, the numeral 10 in the large font, the red and purple colors, the warning “*Influenza increases the risk of heart attack more than 10*”). The feeling of fear is an ancient irrational feeling. The intimidation tactic in pharmaceutical advertising is aimed at the fear of any person losing health. The use of this tactic blocks the addressee’s ability to objectively evaluate information and therefore creates conditions for manipulation.

3.3. Lexical level

The use of proper names and images of real people, such as famous athletes and actors, helps create an informal and unique level of trust in pharmaceutical advertising. Many psychologists believe that one of the most important issues for successful advertising is trust in the source of information. It is known that the more trust a communicator inspires, the easier it is for them to convince other people. In the following sample, the photo of the American singer and actress *Cyndi Lauper* is used (Fig.8). She has advertised *Cosentyx*, a prescription therapy used to treat psoriasis. Large font sizes are designed to stand out, making *Cyndi Lauper message* more noticeable to the audience. Besides, using large font helps establish a visual hierarchy within the advertisement, guiding viewers to the most critical information first. This structure facilitates effective communication by enabling audiences to quickly identify key points. In addition, hyperbole is used in this advertising to emphasize the exclusivity of pharmaceutical product (*thousands of patients*).



Fig.8. Cosentyx advertising (Tompkins, 2018).

Celebrities are often perceived as more relatable to the general public than faceless pharmaceutical corporations, which is why seeing a familiar face can make a pharmaceutical product feel more personal. Featuring celebrities discussing their illnesses helps normalize conversations around health issues that may be stigmatized. Using famous people to promote a medicine makes people believe that it will work. For example, the American actress Sally Field took part in the advertising of Boniva (Fig.9).



Fig.9. Boniva advertising (Arnold, 2011).

In Figure 9, the advertising is created with the help of different modes (the image of Sally Field, the sea and sky at the background, the message “*I wanted to stop my bone loss. But I did more. I reversed it with Boniva*”, and the repetition of the pronoun *I*). Sally Field evokes strong emotional responses in viewers by sharing her personal experiences with a particular illness, and she creates a deeper emotional connection with the audience. All these methods enhance the authenticity and reliability of advertising, creating a trusting relationship between the advertising creators and the audience. Sally Field’s direct gaze evokes feelings of trust and sincerity, as if she is personally addressing the viewer.

As previously discussed, advertisements often employ nonverbal elements such as color symbolism, font variation, and spatial arrangement of text (Fig.9). Celebrities promote a specific vaccine or any other pharmaceutical and have large followings that are likely to be influenced by their opinions. It is worth noting that several celebrities have partnered with Pfizer to promote COVID-19 vaccines and boosters during COVID-19 pandemic as well; for example, Michael Phelps advertised it on his Facebook (Fig.10).

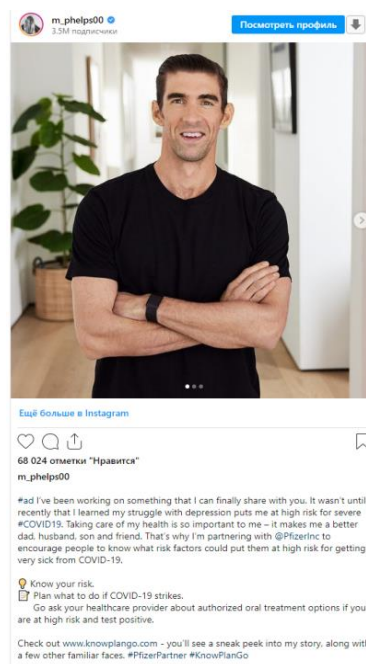


Fig.10. Michael Phelps Facebook page (Michael Phelps, n.d.).

Celebrity endorsements on social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook (Meta) regarding COVID-19 vaccination serve as a form of pharmaceutical advertising, mainly when these endorsements are part of a partnership with pharmaceutical companies. Hashtags(#) in the Facebook post (Fig.10) play a crucial role in increasing engagement. Besides, hashtags in Pfizer advertising (Fig.10) offer contextual cues that deepen the meaning of the message, for example:

[#ad](https://www.facebook.com/michaelphelps/photos/ad-ive-been-working-on-something-important-that-i-can-finally-share-with-you-it-/718810869607920) I've been working on something that I can finally share with you. It wasn't until recently that I learned my struggle with depression puts me at high risk for severe [#COVID19](#). Taking care of my health is so important to me – it makes me a better dad, husband, son and friend. That's why I'm partnering with [@PfizerInc](#) to encourage people to know what risk factors could put them at high risk for getting very sick from COVID-19 (<https://www.facebook.com/michaelphelps/photos/ad-ive-been-working-on-something-important-that-i-can-finally-share-with-you-it-/718810869607920>)

3.4. Images in the pharmaceutical advertising

Any pharmaceutical advertising text acts within a suitably broad framework of its meaning, advertising campaign, and culture, and could be connected to cultural, philosophical and informational background. Sometimes, both the text and the picture (image) are used metaphorically, for example, the Novartis advertising in Fig. 11.



Fig.11. Novartis advertising (Novartis, n.d.).

The phrase “*Sophisticated engines require frequent care*” and the image of the engine used in Novartis advertising serves as a metaphor to highlight the importance of ongoing attention to the health of the man because Novartis is a global healthcare company that helps people with cardiovascular and metabolic diseases, ophthalmology and neurology diseases, etc. Metaphors are powerful tools in pharmaceutical advertising as they can enhance persuasion. The picture resembles a heart, symbolizing that a man’s heart requires regular care, just like a car engine needs regular maintenance.

Advertising often employs ethically questionable speech tactics, like intimidation, to influence consumer behavior. The alarming intonation in such advertising instills a sense of anxiety in the addressee. Intimidation tactics in pharmaceutical advertising target people’s fear of losing their health. Such tactics impede the recipient’s ability to assess the information presented, fostering an environment conducive to manipulation. For instance, the advertising campaign for *Treximet* (Fig.12) exemplifies this approach by instilling fear about health conditions. This is visually represented through a striking image of a headless woman accompanied by the text, “*My migraines are so excruciating I just want to take my head off*”. The image visualizes conceptual metonymy: CONTAINER FOR THE CONTENT (*head for headache*). The verbal resource builds on this metonymy to create a metaphor PAIN IS A PHYSICAL OBJECT that can be thrown away. Together they form a metaphonymy “*take my head off*” that reads TAKE OFF THE CONTAINER (of pain) IS TO GET RID OF THE CONTENT (pain). The cognitive-pragmatic approach allows to take a new look at the objects of anthropocentric research, which include metaphonymy, because according to Shevchenko (2019, p. 171), cognitive pragmatics concentrates on cognitive principles and processes, which underlie meaning-making in the utterance/discourse or non-linguistic situational, social, and cultural environment.

Within the framework of traditional linguistics, a structural-aspectual approach to the study of metaphonymy has developed, which only allows revealing partially the theoretical potential behind this complex phenomenon. The term *metaphonymy* was introduced by Goossens (1990) to define

the interaction of two cognitive entities – metaphor and metonymy. To build on these ideas, scholars considered cases of simultaneous interaction of several metaphors or several metonymies, as a result of which endless chains were formed (Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera-Masegosa, 2011). The primary task of metaphonymy analysis in pharmaceutical advertising is to find out how metaphonymy models consciousness and reality.

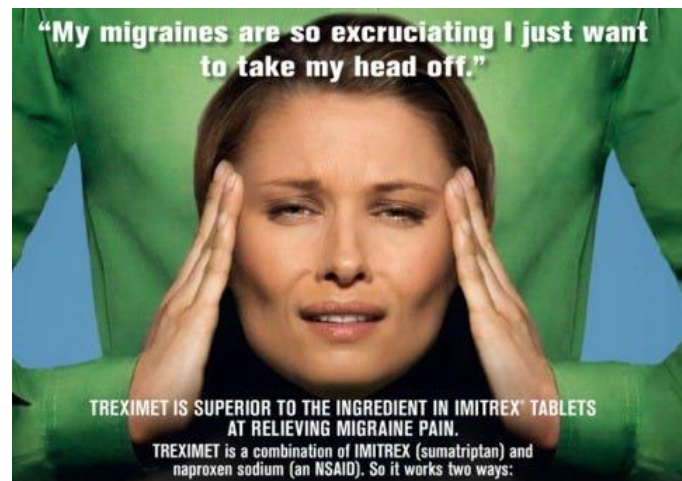


Fig.12. Treximet advertising (Ruiz, 2010).

The advertising campaign for *Difflam*, through its use of verbal and non-verbal elements, exemplifies the use of metaphor, metonymy, and metaphonymy (Fig.13). Depicting a throat as a ‘cactus’ evokes a vivid comparison between the discomfort of a scratchy throat and the prickly nature of a cactus. This metaphor shows the painful feeling associated with sore throats, prompting people to compare their symptoms to the picture in advertising. The advertising creators use ‘throat’ to refer to all throat-related ailments or discomforts, it exemplifies metonymy by substituting a part (the throat) for the whole sore throat symptoms. In Fig.13, *Difflam* advertising utilizes metaphonymy by blending metaphorical imagery with metonymic references to create a compelling message that resonates with consumers. This strategy presents both the experience of pain and the relief offered by the product, making it memorable and persuasive. Letters in black against a light-colored background create a strong contrast, making it easy to read and understand. They are associated with formality and professionalism, which is essential for pharmaceutical advertising. Using a grimace in advertisements for sore throat remedies effectively communicates pain, engages emotions, fosters the connection between the illness and medication, and serves as a call to action for potential consumers.



Fig.13.Difflam advertising (Sore throat remedies, 2022).

Pharmaceutical advertising often suggests that the medicine will help immediately and the effect will be fast, although it is impossible to verify. The visual and verbal components of advertising usually emphasize the effect which the advertised product aims to provide (Fig.14).

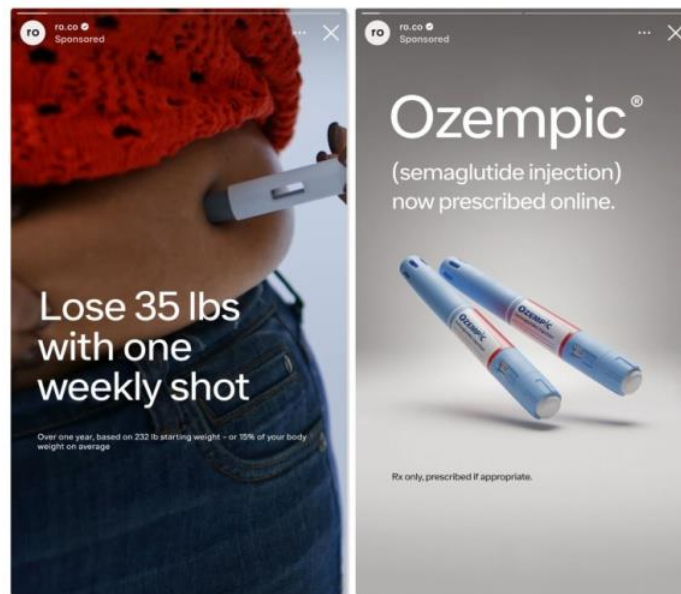


Fig.14.Ozempic advertising (Berg, 2023).

The attention-grabbing slogan “*Lose 35 lbs with one weekly shot*” is memorable and concentrates on the pharmaceutical ability to help with weight loss. Advertising consists of two vertical panels that promote *Ozempic*. The person is dressed in jeans and a red sweater. The abdomen in advertising is associated with weight management and metabolic health. By highlighting this area of the body, the advertisement directly addresses concerns related to obesity and diabetes, which are vital issues that *Ozempic* aims to treat. This visual cue helps consumers immediately associate the medication with weight loss and improved health outcomes. By focusing on the abdomen and the injection in its advertising, *Ozempic* effectively uses visual metaphor and metonymy to communicate its health benefits clearly and emotionally resonate with its target audience. Numerals from this advertising

provide specific, quantitative information and help consumers understand the potential benefits of this pharmaceutical. The sentence “*Lose 35 lbs with one weekly shot*” is written in bold, large font. Numerals create a sense of urgency or importance. The phrase “*Over one year, based on 252 adults starting at 23+ or 19% of your body weight on average*” in tiny writing is below. Stating that “*Over one year, based on 252 adults starting at 23+ or 19% of your body weight on average 8 out of 10 patients experienced relief*” motivates people to consider the medication seriously, as it suggests a high probability of positive outcomes. The phrase “*one weekly shot*” indicates that weight loss is simple.

So, images in advertising visually demonstrate the pharmaceutical product’s use or benefits, they evoke emotions and create a connection with the audience and the medication and make the product more memorable, they convey information quickly and efficiently.

4. Conclusions

This present study offers a multimodal approach in media linguistics, focusing specifically on pharmaceutical advertising—a type of commercial advertising. This research has proved that modern pharmaceutical advertising is becoming more complicated and multifaceted. Verbal and non-verbal elements work together in advertising discourse to convey messages to readers and shape their decisions and actions.

Pharmaceutical advertising involves various semiotic resources—verbal, graphic, and visual—that are equally important for capturing the audience’s attention and persuading them to buy the medication. The findings reveal the most typical advertising structure: an image, a headline, a subhead, the main advertising text (or body text), an echo-phrase, and product details. Advertising texts are designed to inform and persuade within the advertising message.

Images realize both pragmatic and cognitive functions: on the one hand, they are effective instruments to attract readers’ attention; on the other, they contribute to meaning-making by decoding the advertising creator’s multimodal message. The role of color and the choice of definite color are important in pharmaceutical advertising. The research proved the hypothesis that combining verbal and non-verbal components in pharmaceutical advertising can persuade people to choose a particular medicine.

In future, analyzing pharmaceutical advertising on social media could provide insights into the unique ways that ads combine different forms of communication to interact with audiences.

Declaration of competing interest

The author has no competing interests or funding support to declare.

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ВІЗУАЛЬНІ ТА ТЕКСТОВІ ЗАСОБИ В ФАРМАЦЕВТИЧНІЙ РЕКЛАМІ: МУЛЬТИМОДАЛЬНИЙ АНАЛІЗ ТА ЕТИЧНІ ДІЛЕМИ

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Анотація

Ця стаття присвячена мультимодальності в сучасній англомовній рекламі. Вплив реклами на споживачів був предметом багатьох досліджень серед лінгвістів. У цій статті я спираюся на теоретичні та практичні дані, отримані дослідниками, які вивчали віртуальних інфлюенсерів у мультимодальній рекламі, обговорювали унікальні характеристики стратегій реалізації сугестії в політичній рекламі, оцінювали формулу впливу рекламного дискурсу з точки зору позитивної та негативної спрямованості реклами, досліджували різноманітні функції різних контактних мов у рекламі, явище мультимодальності в польській рекламі фармацевтичних препаратів за допомогою аудіо-візуальних роликів. Науковці також використовували прагматичний підхід до реклами у Великій Британії та Японії і провели мультимодальний дискурс-аналіз реклами ліків від малярії. Однак роль мультимодальності в контексті фармацевтичної реклами залишається недостатньо вивченою. Рекламовані фармацевтичні продукти впливають на свідомість людини. Оманлива або неточна інформація може серйозно вплинути на споживачів, включаючи несприятливі наслідки для здоров'я. Унікальна природа фармацевтичної реклами відрізняє її від інших видів реклами, таких як політична чи споживча. Матеріалом для дослідження слугували 500 зразків у паперовому та електронному форматах. Я припускаю, що мультимодальний характер фармацевтичної реклами, що включає як вербальні, так і невербальні елементи, значно посилює її переконуючий вплив, впливаючи на емоції споживачів і спонукаючи їх до вибору конкретних фармацевтичних препаратів. Щоб довести цю гіпотезу, я визначила закономірності взаємодії вербальних і невербальних компонентів через призму слів, образів, знаків і символів. У цьому дослідженні мультимодальний підхід дозволив розкрити як приховані смисли, так і тонкі тактики маніпуляції, що використовуються у фармацевтичній рекламі.

Ключові слова: реклама, рекламний текст, мультимодальний текст, мультимодальність, прагматика, фармацевтика.

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ECO-ACTIVIST IMAGERY IN LITERARY TEXTS FOR CHILDREN (A CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH POSTMODERN FAIRY TALES AND SHORT STORIES)

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Abstract

This research focuses on the eco-activist multimodal imagery in English postmodern fairy tales and short stories for children as a crucial tool in meaning-making. It is claimed that literary texts for children dynamically reflect current global trends in culture, environmental pollution, gender equality, and family issues. While some topics remain taboo for young readers, others are increasingly prevalent, gradually replacing magical worlds with more realistic, thought-provoking imagery. It has been observed that in recent years, the participation of young people and children in the eco-activist movement has been increasing. They advocate for environmental preservation and solving urgent environmental problems. Literary texts for children are essential tools for fostering a responsible attitude toward the environment at a young age. Due to them, child-readers are introduced to crucial eco-centric issues and ways of solving them and taught the consequences of their actions on nature.

The analysis of our case study reveals that the protagonists of eco-activist fairy tales are primarily children concerned about environmental issues. Shadow narratives and the point of view of the child-focaliser are realized by the visual means, i.e. visual metaphors, salience of definite objects on the pictures, interplay of colours and shapes. It has been observed that visual imagery expands, clarifies environmental protection issues and appeals to the better understanding of child-readers their role in preserving the planet and keeping it clean and safe for living. Visual components clearly show the child-reader the damage caused to the environment by human activity: polluted air, water bodies and cities, injured animals, and deforestation. Important meanings are embedded in the dominant colours of the illustrations: green and blue predominate in the illustrations of nature, while grey and black accompany the images of the results of anthropogenic activity. The victory of Good (nature) in fairy tales is represented by a shift from grey and black to green. Intertextual links between literary texts for children by the same author can be formed through illustrations. Thus, a single fictional world is created in which the eco-activist activity of a child-antagonist is not an isolated phenomenon.

Keywords: *child-reader, eco-activist fairy tale, eco-activist imagery, intertextuality, literary text for children, postmodern fairy tale*



1. Introduction

The number and severity of environmental problems have been increasing in the recent years, including a general rise in air temperature, the destruction of the ozone layer of the atmosphere, loss of biodiversity, unsustainable use of resources. These urgent problems caused the response in the form of the currently spreading eco-activism movement, with more and more participants, organisations, and media platforms joining it. Eco-activism is a form of participation in social and political campaigns to prevent environmental damage (Kraja, 2018). This movement is now a crucial component in the campaign against climate change and environmental degradation. It helps to raise people's awareness of the anthropogenic impact on the environment.

The issue of environment protection has led to the formation of different organisations, movements, environment preservation groups. Notably, the leading international organisation in environmental protection, the United Nations Environment Programme, was established on 5 June 1972. It aims at inspiring, informing and enabling countries and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising the well-being of future generations and at addressing the most pressing environmental challenges facing humanity – from restoring the ozone layer to protecting the world's seas and promoting a green, inclusive economy (UN Environment Programme, n.d.).

The non-governmental organisations that bring together activists from all over the world also play an essential role in the environmental movement, for example, the Centre for Biological Diversity (an organisation aimed at combating threats to endangered species and climate change), Greenpeace (an international non-governmental organisation whose goal is “to ensure the Earth's ability to nurture life in all its diversity”), International Union for Conservation of Nature (an association of governments and non-governmental groups aimed at economic development and nature conservation), National Wildlife Federation (a wildlife conservation group that also takes action in the areas of clean energy and climate change), World Resources Institute (that conducts research in climate, energy, food, water, forests, and equity), and others (Berkeley Library, n.d.).

Eco-activism is facilitated by eco-narratives embodied on various platforms: speeches at summits, protests, eco-centric literature, movies, installations, etc. An example of such narratives is Greenpeace's environmental videos. They indirectly raise awareness of environmental issues through narratives highlighting climate threats, combining emotive imagery with factual material to create compelling stories. Greenpeace's eco-storytelling aims to strengthen the emotional and intellectual connections with nature, using emotional appeal to generate empathy and urgency. By connecting the climate crisis directly to people's lives and well-being, these videos evoke emotions, inspire viewers to feel concerned, and motivate them to take action (Krysanova, 2024, p. 37).

Recent years have been characterised by the active participation of young people in eco-activism and even their leadership in the fight for climate justice. In particular, the school climate strikes of 2018-2019 became history's most extensive global climate mobilisation. The Fridays for Future movement began after the well-known Swedish activist Greta Thunberg protested for three weeks in front of the Swedish parliament in 2018 to draw attention to the climate change emergency. Inspired by her example, other students worldwide have begun to organise their protests and demand that politicians do more to recognise the reality and seriousness of climate change and take action to address it. These regular marches have united young people in over 100 countries. In 2019, this global student movement was awarded the Champions of the Earth Award, the United Nations' highest environmental honour. These mobilisations have paved the way for more ambitious and equitable climate action, raising the issue in public discourse and adding momentum to new climate policies (Gormann, 2023; UN Environment Programme, 2019). Given this, it is essential to study postmodern fairy tales with eco-activist themes and their multimodal aspects, as they form children's views on such important theme as care for the environment.

For postmodern fairy tales, typical fairy tale attributes such as magic, supernatural characters, metamorphoses are not enough to interest a modern child-reader. Contemporary heroes, such as eco-activists, are often real people actively working to change the world for good. One such

example is Greta Thunberg, whose appearance in the media caused a huge resonance in the public sphere. Therefore, the characters in postmodern fairy tales represent people who preserve the environment, develop alternative energy sources, prevent pollution, and protect animals. Postmodern fairy tales introduce child-readers to crucial eco-centric issues: air and water pollution, deforestation, reuse of materials, plastic recycling. This way, children learn to be aware of the consequences of their actions on nature and take care of the world around them.

Our study *aims* to analyse the eco-activist imagery in English postmodern fairy tales. Accordingly, we set the *tasks* to find out the specific purposes of multimodal imagery in eco-activist fairy tales, to determine the relations between the eco-activist imagery and the verbal component of the literary texts for children, to identify intertextual multimodal relations between the fairy tales/short stories, and to outline the role of colours in the eco-activist imagery. *The subject matter* of our study is eco-activist sense-making by means of verbal and visual components of the eco-activist fairy tales and short stories, as well as the intertextuality and colour symbolism of the eco-activist imagery in the texts for children. A *case study* of the research has been constituted by four English postmodern fairy tales of the eco-activist thematics: *Greta and the Giants* (Tucker, 2019), *The Green Giant* (Cottle, 2019), *The Blue Giant* (Cottle, 2020), and *The Tale of a Toothbrush: A Story of Plastic in our Oceans* (Leonard, 2020).

2. Theoretical background and method

Multimodal narratology has been developing recently through foundational research by scholars from Europe (Bell, 2019; Doloughan, 2010, 2011; Gibbons, 2016; Herman, 2010; Nørgaard, 2010; Ryan & Thon, 2014; Toolan, 2016) and Ukraine (Bieliekhova & Tsapiv, 2023; Izotova, 2018; Krysanova, 2024; Leshchenko, 2018; Shevchenko, 2023, 2024; Tsapiv, 2020, 2022; Vorobyova, 2021; Zhabotynska & Brynko, 2022). Significant contributions have been made by G. Kress and T. van Leeuwen in multimodal discourse analysis (2001) and grammar of visual design (2006), as well as by N. Nørgaard with her works in multimodal stylistics (Nørgaard, 2018). Numerous studies have focused on contemporary fiction, including the postmodern period. Digital storytelling (Bell, 2019), comics (Cohn, 2013; Eisner, 1985; Kukkonen, 2013), picture books (Doonan, 1996) and graphic novels (Ewert, 2004; Ghute & DeKoven, 2006) demonstrate the art of creating stories using text, images, signs, colours, and the interplay of size and shape. The power of narratives within their ability for transformation and realization in different media creates a special focus of interest on their enormous potential to combine art forms and modes for creating senses (Bruhn, 2016; Elleström, 2019). These elements create meanings that must be interpreted by an engaged reader, capable of analysis. Picture books for children showcase a unique blend of images and words to create meanings that young readers can decode (Doonan, 1996; Hahn, 2017).

Multimodal narratology has provided a platform for developing ideas and strategies about how different modes create meaning (Page, 2010). Today, children are more drawn to visual and audiovisual content, yet picture books remain popular, as they address important, contemporary issues in ways that resonate with children (Arizpe & Styles, 2016). Multimodal narratives convey deep meanings, moral lessons, values, and rules in a clear and accessible way for younger audiences.

Picture books are increasingly moving away from fantasy and imaginary creatures, instead reflecting images of the real world, effectively serving as an “ABC” for children’s future adult lives. Digital storytelling, cartoons, 3D-augmented reality images, and digital tools that bring characters to life spark children’s curiosity and encourage them to explore and discover objects in the real world.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Uncovering world’s problems. Revealing hidden meanings

The fairy tale *Greta and the Giants* by the English writer Z. Tucker (2019), inspired by the Greta Thunberg campaign, is dedicated to the problems of deforestation and forest degradation as some of

the most severe environmental threats. Forests cover almost a third of the land on our planet; they are home to many species, purify water and air, protect us from infectious diseases, and mitigate the effects of climate change. Nowadays, forests worldwide are threatened by deforestation and human activities such as agriculture, logging, grazing, road construction, and more (World Wildlife Fund, n.d.). Deforestation is an urgent problem for humanity, so it is reflected in postmodern fairy tales.

The story clearly shows the influence of Greta Thunberg's biography, her environmental and political activities, and the *Fridays for Future* movement. The main character of the fairy tale, a little girl named Greta, lives in a beautiful forest that the Giants threaten. When the Giants first came to the forest, they cut down the trees to build their houses. That was not enough, so they kept cutting down more trees until almost no forest was left, and no one could stop them. But then Greta bravely decided to stay on their daily path with a "Stop!" sign. The Giants initially ignored her, but more animals and people joined her. The crowd became so large that it forced the Giants to stop.

The illustrations are essential to the fairy tale, revealing hidden meanings and implementing shadow narratives (Tsapiv, 2020, p. 202). They portray the anthropic protesters as children, while the fairy tale antagonists, the Giants, are depicted as adult men and women constantly engaged in industrial activities (see Fig.1). Thus, the Giants represent the world leaders to whom Greta Thunberg addressed her most famous speech, delivered on 23 September 2023 at the UN Climate Action Summit in New York (National Public Radio, 2019).



Fig.1. Eco-activists have finally attracted the attention of the Giants
(*Greta and the Giants* by Z. Tucker).

In this way, the point of view of the child-focaliser is created with the help of a multimodal metaphor (Tsapiv, 2022). From the children's point of view, adults (the giants) are too busy (tall) to always hear what children tell them. For adults, metaphorically presented as giants, problems that are of great importance to children are unimportant and too tiny for their attention. The image of the giants (adults) does not entirely fit the size of the illustrations, demonstrating that children are out of their consideration. This way, it is portrayed that they cannot see the problems of those who suffer from their industrial activities. This is precisely what Greta Thunberg accused politicians and businesspeople of in her speech. Like the story's protagonist, it can be difficult for eco-activists to communicate their position to people. However, the story asserts that change is possible, and everyone can contribute to a better world.

The interplay of character sizes in the book's illustrations creates a contrast between childhood and adulthood, emphasizing the importance of children being heard. Adults are metaphorically depicted as giants, and the gap between them and children is visually represented by their height. Children are shown standing hand in hand with animals, symbolizing a unified ecosystem that suffers from a lack of awareness regarding its needs.

3.2. Illustrating the level of pollution. Clarifying and expanding the information, creating new meanings

Illustrations of postmodern fairy tales contain additional information that may be outside the verbal component of the text. In particular, illustrations of fairy tales of the eco-activist thematic clearly show the child-reader how much the environment (mainly air and water bodies) is polluted by human waste. This topic is implemented in two fairy tales by the British author and illustrator K. Cottle (2019, 2020) and in the fairy tale *The Tale of a Toothbrush: A Story of Plastic in Our Oceans* by M. G. Leonard (2020). The protagonists of both stories by K. Cottle are little girls. This narrative construction of the text allows the child-reader to put themselves in the shoes of the heroines. The protagonist of the fairy tale *The Green Giant* (Cottle, 2019), Bea, visits her grandfather in the countryside. There, she meets a Giant made of greenery and plants. He used to live in the city, but human activity has made the city and its air unfit for the Giant. Meanwhile, the protagonist of the fairy tale *The Blue Giant* (Cottle, 2020), a girl named Meera, and her mother are asked by the Blue Giant to clean up the ocean and save marine life from plastic pollution.

Through illustrations, these fairy tales show the impact of anthropogenic factors on nature: smog and grey polluted cities, as well as fish, birds and other marine life affected by the abundance of plastic in the ocean. This way, a child-reader is introduced to the problems of air, sea, ocean pollution, and proper waste management. The text of the stories may contain general information (for example, that Meera and her mother help the animals one by one). At the same time, the illustrations provide information on how animals suffer from plastic overload in water bodies: a crab cannot get out of a tomato can, a seagull has its beak tied, and a whale cannot free itself from fishing nets stuck to it (see Fig.2).



Fig.2. Marine animals suffer from ocean pollution by human waste
(*The Blue Giant* by K. Cottle).

The problem of water pollution and plastic recycling is also central to the fairy tale *The Tale of a Toothbrush: A Story of Plastic in Our Oceans* (Leonard, 2020). The story is about Sammy the Toothbrush, which becomes unnecessary for his owner, Sophia, and the girl's mother throws him away. Despite this, Sammy wants to return to his owner. During his journey home, he faces different environmental pollution with plastic waste: toothbrushes, bottles, bags, and plastic straws (see Fig.3). This variety of plastic waste shows a child-reader the diverse ways the environment can be polluted, the state of environmental pollution, and its severity. This encourages the readers to be more critical of their actions. In such narratives, the images are often more realistic and, at times, more 'expressive' than the text itself. The plot, featuring a toothbrush as the main character, conveys unnatural or abstract ideas, while the illustrations remain objective, depicting the real consequences of pollution.

Given this, the illustrations in postmodern eco-activist narratives create meaning by realistically portraying environmental issues while keeping children at the centre of the story, highlighting the urgency of pollution.



Fig.3. The expansion of the visual capabilities of the protagonist-focalizer and the child-reader (*The Blue Giant* by K. Cottle).

In addition to clarifying and expanding the information presented in the verbal component of the narrative, illustrations can create new meanings that are not mentioned in the text. For example, the text of the narrative episode of Sammy's meeting with the albatross does not contain information about the level of pollution in the water around them. However, the close-up illustrations and salience of the albatross show the terrible state of the ocean: the surface is filled with empty plastic bottles, containers, nets, bags, and wrappers, when birds are under constant danger. When the albatross soars into the sky, the visual capabilities of the protagonist-focalizer and the child-reader are expanded. It becomes apparent that this degree of pollution is not specific to the location of the narrative episode but extends further, even beyond the horizon (see Fig.3). Thus, the illustrations in eco-activist fairy tales expand the information provided in the verbal component or can carry utterly new information for the reader.

3.3. Intertextuality of eco-activist imagery in postmodern fairy tales

Like any other literary text, a fairy tale reflects a cultural and historical epoch (Tsapiv, 2018, p.61). One of the most prominent features of postmodernist poetics is intertextuality (Babalyuk, 2010, p.7; Bekhta, 2002, p.216), also reflected in postmodern fairy tales. For example, some of R. Dahl's literary texts for children are combined by intertextual connections into a joint fictional world. Intertextuality in the author's fairy tales is implemented by transmitting attributes and characters from one literary text to another (Andrieieva, 2024, p.14). In K. Cottle's eco-activist fairy tales, multimodal means create a joint fictional world. When Meera, the protagonist of *The Blue Giant* (Cottle, 2020), realises that the pollution level of the ocean is too high for her to eliminate, she returns to the sea repeatedly to clean up the rubbish. More and more people follow her suit, similar to Greta's movement (Tucker, 2019). As depicted in the illustrations, the number of people cleaning the ocean shore is growing. In addition, one of the illustrations, which shows how children help the environment, also depicts Bea, the heroine of the previous story by K. Cottle (2019).



Fig.4. Intertextual usage of the imagery in eco-activist fairy tales (*The Blue Giant* by K. Cottle)

In Figure 4, Bea and her grandfather are planting greenery in his garden. In the verbal component of the narrative, there is no information that Meera and Bea know each other or live in the same fictional world. However, a child-reader familiar with the previous story can easily recognise Bea and her grandfather by their appearance and the attributes of the corresponding literary text: the greenhouse, the garden, and the vegetation. While blue shades mostly dominate the illustrations relating to Meera's environmental activities as she fights against ocean pollution, Bea's illustration is dominated by green colour, as her activities in the previous story are aimed at greening cities and cleaning the air. This way, the child-reader is shown that helping nature is not uncommon, and more and more people, particularly children, are taking active steps to save the environment.

As part of the general regulatory function of the fairy tale, this encourages the child-reader to participate in the eco-activist movement.

3.4. The binary opposition of the background colours (green/blue vs. grey/black)

The traditional fairy tale confrontation of Good and Evil in eco-activist fairy tales is realised through the opposition of nature and anthropogenic activity. This opposition is also reflected at the multimodal level, in particular through the colours of the background, namely green/blue (nature) and grey/black (the results of human activity). At the same time, the victory of Good over Evil in fairy tales is implemented in the illustrations through the change of colours from grey to green. For example, Bea (Cottle, 2019) spends the summer with her grandfather in the countryside, surrounded by nature and greenery. When she returns to the city, she notices how grey and sad it is and plants the seeds given to her by the Green Giant. This way, she brings nature back to the city, which is accompanied by the colour change from grey to green in the illustrations (see Fig.5).



Fig.5. Bringing nature back to the city
(*The Green Giant* by K. Cottle).



Fig.6. Colour change depicts nature's victory over human activity
(*Greta and the Giants* by Z. Tucker).

The same tendency persists in other eco-activist fairy tales. In particular, in the fairy tale *Greta and the Giants* (Tucker, 2019), the city built by the Giants is depicted in black and grey. The air in the city is dark and polluted by smog from industry. In contrast to the forest where Greta and her friends live, the houses in the city also look dull and dark. However, nature triumphs due to the protests when the Giants cease their activities, stop cutting down the trees, and move into the forest. The no longer inhabited city is engulfed by greenery, the sky becomes clear and transparent, and green shades begin to prevail in the illustrations again (see Fig.6). These contrasting illustrations symbolize the dominance of nature and its ability to regenerate despite destructive human activities. However, to do so, the help of characters (in fairy tales) and a child-reader (in the real world) is needed.

4. Conclusions

Eco-activist multimodal narratives for children create a unique combination of realistic characters and pictures with metaphorical meanings, created by means of verbal and visual modes. It has been proven that the child-focaliser's perspective is developed using visual metaphors, image salience, and the interplay of size and shape. The opposition between childhood and adulthood often symbolizes the contrast between the environment and pollution.

This research enhances our understanding of new character types who lack magical powers but represent real-world figures, like Greta Thunberg, known for their eco-activist movements. Another type includes anthropomorphized objects, like a plastic toothbrush, symbolizing environmental issues such as pollution. Birds, animals, and sea creatures are depicted as children's friends who need protection, with a strong focus on their vulnerability.

In postmodern eco-activist narratives, illustrations expand and clarify the meanings reflected in the text, vividly demonstrating the consequences of environmental pollution. Visual metaphors, object salience, and contrasting colours engage child readers, encouraging a deeper understanding of environmental safety and the harmful effects of pollution.

Eco-activist fairy tales of the same author can be integrated into a joint fictional world by intertextual connections on the visual level. This emphasizes the scale of the eco-activist actions taken by children to save the environment and encourages the child-reader to follow the steps of the characters.

The dynamic interaction between words and images not only enhances meaning-making but also encourages readers to actively interpret the stories. By presenting eco-activist themes in an accessible yet thought-provoking way, postmodern fairy tales teach young readers about the impact of human activities on the environment, urging them to take an active role in preserving nature, which may be of particular interest for *further analysis*.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

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ЕКОАКТИВІСТСЬКА ОБРАЗНІСТЬ У ХУДОЖНІХ ТЕКСТАХ ДЛЯ ДІТЕЙ (НА ПРИКЛАДІ АНГЛІЙСЬКИХ ПОСТМОДЕРНІСТСЬКИХ КАЗОК ТА ОПОВІДАНЬ)

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Анотація

Дослідження присвячено екоактивістській мультимодальній образності в англійських постмодерністських казках та оповіданнях для дітей як важливому інструменті створення смислів. Літературні тексти для дітей динамічно відображають сучасні глобальні тенденції в культурі, проблему забруднення навколишнього середовища, гендерної рівності та питання родинних стосунків. Деякі теми все ще залишаються табуйованими для юних читачів, тоді як інші набувають все більшого поширення, поступово замінюючи чарівні світи на більш реалістичні й образи, що спонукають до роздумів. Останнім часом дедалі збільшується участь молоді та дітей в екоактивістському русі. Вони виступають за збереження довкілля та розв'язання нагальних екологічних проблем. Одним із засобів формування відповідального ставлення до середовища у юному віці є художні тексти для дітей. Завдяки ним читач-дитина знайомиться з важливими екоцентричними проблемами та шляхами їх вирішення, а також вчиться усвідомлювати наслідки своїх дій щодо природи.

Проведений аналіз показує, що головними героями екоактивістських казок є переважно діти, стурбовані екологічними проблемами. Тіньові наративи та точка зору дитини-фокалізатора реалізуються за допомогою візуальних засобів, таких як візуальні метафори, салієнтність певних об'єктів на ілюстраціях, взаємодія кольорів і форм. З'ясовано, що візуальні образи розширюють і уточнюють сенси захисту довкілля, спонукаючи юних читачів краще розуміти їхню роль у збереженні планети та підтриманні її чистоти й безпеки для життя. Візуальні компоненти наочно показують читачу дитині рівень шкоди, завданої довкіллю діяльністю людини: забруднені повітря, водойми та міста, постраждалі тварини, вирубані ліси, та інші результати людської діяльності. Важливі смисли закладені у домінуючих кольорах ілюстрацій: зелений та синій кольори переважають на ілюстраціях природи, натомість сірий та чорний супроводжують зображення результатів антропої діяльності. Перемога Добра (природи) у казках супроводжується переходом від сірого та чорного кольорів ілюстрацій до зеленого. Через ілюстрації можуть створюватися інтертекстуальні зв'язки між художніми текстами одного автора. Таким чином, утворюється єдиний художній світ, у якому екоактивістська діяльність персонажа-дитини не є поодиноким явищем.

Ключові слова: екоактивістська казка, екоактивістська образність, інтертекстуальність, постмодерністська казка, художній текст для дітей, читач-дитина.

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RECEPTION OF THE POLITICAL NEWS NARRATIVE IN READERS' RESPONSES: MULTIMODALITY AND INTERTEXTUALITY

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Abstract

Developed in the field of international relations, the theory of the strategic narrative (Miskimmon et al., 2013; 2017 among others) identifies it as a means for political actors to construct a shared meaning of international politics, and to shape the perceptions, beliefs, and behaviour of domestic and international actors. The authors of the theory maintain that the explanation of the workings of the strategic narrative presumes the study of its formation, projection, and reception. Such explanation brings together various scholarly fields aimed at the search of the lacking methodology that demonstrates how the formation, projection, and reception aspects of the strategic narrative work together as a triptych. The proposed article approaches this problem from the perspective of cognitive linguistics that studies conceptual grounds for verbally delivered information. The article forwards and tests a novel methodological framework, which posits a cognitive ontology of the information, featured verbally and visually, as the feasible grounds for tracking regularities in the simultaneous dynamics of the three narrative aspects. The article focuses on the projection / reception narrative aspects, represented in a media news text and the readers' responses to it – the issue relevant for the linguistic field of intertextuality. Methodologically and thematically, the article continues the previous research (Zhabotynska & Velivchenko, 2019; Zhabotynska & Ryzhova, 2022; Chaban et al. 2023; Chaban et al. 2024 among others) of the formation / projection aspects of the strategic narrative featured in a news media text.

Key words: *cognitive ontology, strategic political narrative, media text, multimodality, reception of the narrative, reader's response, intertextuality.*

1. Introduction

This study, informed by cognitive linguistics and semiotics, is done in the field of political narratology that extends into the overlapping domains of political linguistics, media linguistics, and the linguistic theories of intertextuality and multimodality. The study *focuses* on news-related user content, represented by readers' responses to the strategic political narrative featured in the news media text. The research *pivot* is the framework of regularities in the semantic interplay of this text with the text of the readers' responses. This topic has *pertinence* to today's scholarly debate about user comments, which demonstrates a steep increase explained by the growing employment of social and digital media for news, and the growing pervasiveness of user comment threads in news comment (Stroud et al., 2016; Newman et al., 2023). The increase of such debate is also accounted for by the multi-faceted nature of user comments, which enables their examination from different

perspectives. A novel perspective addressed in this study links the research on user comments, readers of political news articles in particular, with the exploration of strategic political narratives.

The strategic political narrative's existence includes the stages of formation, projection, and reception (Miskimmon et al., 2013). Being methodologically oriented and carried out from a linguistic standpoint, the analysis of their interaction aims to expose how the narrative content, having been shaped, is semiotically 'portrayed', or projected, and how the content and the form of this 'portrait' resonate with the reader. The *problem* is that such analysis requires a conceptually novel and utility-driven methodology which can be employed in the study of all three stages of the narrative's 'life cycle'. It can be argued that a plausible methodological contribution, borrowed from cognitive linguistics, is a cognitive ontology, or systemically structured homogeneous content (Zhabotynskaya, 2017; Zhabotynska 2020). An ontological approach to the arrangement of politically relevant information demonstrated an explanatory power in the previous analysis of the narrative content (Zhabotynska & Velivchenko 2019), and its portrayal through verbal means (Chaban et al., 2023; Chaban & Zhabotynska, 2024) and visual images integrated into a multimodal political text (Chaban et al. 2019-2020; Zhabotynska & Ryzhova 2022; Zhabotynska & Chaban, 2024). In the present study, an ontological approach becomes operational in the examination of the ways in which the political narrative of a news media text evolves in the narrative of its readers.

Further, the article sets out some theoretical prerequisites pertinent for this research and concerned with the political narrative and its comments by the readers, with a concise survey of the scholarly enquiries discussing such comments. Then, the article outlines a new ontologically-based methodology intended for the study of interplay between the information in the media narrative and in the readers' responses. Application of this methodology is illustrated with the analysis of a multimodal political text coming from an American media outlet and describing the Russian-Ukrainian war – the topic to which American readers generously respond. The concluding discussion generalizes the findings and estimates their theoretical and practical implications.

2. Theoretical background. Political news narrative and its readers

The essence of humanness has come increasingly to be described as the tendency to tell stories, and to make sense of the world through narrative. In linguistics, narrative was one of the first discourse genres to be analyzed, and it continues to be among the most intensively discussed (De Finna & Johnston, 2015, p.152). In political studies and international relations, scholarship on narratives has become established in the last decade, heralding the so-called 'narrative turn' (Oliveira, 2020; Chaban et al. 2023, p. 3). A *narrative* is understood as a text whose structure represents the teller's image of the world, and as a textually arranged image of the world imposed upon the audience (Zhabotynska & Velivchenko, 2019, p. 365). In the second sense, typical of social sciences, narrative is a meaning structure that organizes the human experience of time by integrating the events in the past, the present and the future into a meaningful whole (Ku, 2018, p. 9). A narrative 'groups together and integrates into one whole and complete story multiple and scattered events' (Ricoeur, 1984; Dennison, 2021, p. 3). In progressing through time, narrative allows continuous revisions in the retrospective and prospective configuration of a sequence of events (Ku, 2018, p. 9). Narrative is embedded in all kinds of social activity.

Political narratives can be defined as "stories about sociopolitical issues, which exist within an imagined community, where the actions of political actors and/or the outcomes of political events have important causal effects" (McLaughlin & Velez, 2017, p. 22). In many ways, political narratives are similar to the fictional narratives found in a novel, television show, or movie. They are dramatic plots filled with binary narratives about 'good guys' and 'bad guys' (McLaughlin & Velez, 2017, p. 23). A political narrative, even generated outside an official political framework, may be considered 'political' if the themes it considers are 'political' (Shenhav, 2006). Such narrative affects our perceptions of political reality, which, in turn, affect our actions in response to or in anticipation of political events (Zhabotynska & Ryzhova, 2022, p. 117). Defined as a reflection of current political affairs, the political narrative is represented primarily through media.

Political narratives may be strategic. *Strategic narrative* is the story furthering an official political strategy via the construction of “a shared meaning of the past, present and future of international politics to shape the behaviour of domestic and international actors” (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 2; Miskimmon et al., 2017, p. 6). “Put simply, strategic narratives are tools that political actors employ to promote their interests, values, and aspirations for the international order by managing expectations and altering the discursive environment. These narratives define ‘who we are’ and ‘what kind of world order we want’” (Miskimmon et al., 2017, p.1). The complete communication cycle of a strategic narrative includes its *formation* by the political actors, its *projection* in the media environment, and its *reception* by the public and/or other political actors – domestic or international (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p.8-12).

The producers of strategic narratives are primarily elites, not just government leaders, who “construct the strategic narrative through deliberative interaction in ‘discursive communities’ and then communicate it to the general public through speeches, press conferences, official documents, and more”. Strategic narratives “can be carried and remediated by journalists, news formats, and even films and documentaries. Through all these channels, narratives become discussed and deliberated through media and the ‘talking’ or ‘chattering’ classes” (Miskimmon et al., 2017, p. 5).

The media environment that disseminates political narratives, through news stories in particular, has now advanced an on-line culture of interaction with media audiences. The Internet has revolutionized media consumption, opened new channels for news reporting, and created opportunities for the public to express opinions and emotions instantly, through readers’ comments (Rosen et al., 2019, p. 244). Online comment sections provide a space for the public to interact with news, to express their opinions, and to learn about others’ views (Stroud et al., 2016, p.1). At present, user-generated content represents an ever-increasing proportion of media content where readers evaluate, disseminate and comment on news. Readers’ comments are usually given below news articles, thus reaching the same audience as professionally journalistic content (Kubin et al., 2024, p.1). Media outlets offer online audiences an opportunity to comment directly – and publicly – on news texts, by doing so on the sites to which they are native. In such a way, the news outlets capture a raw and immediate record of public reactions to news events, and the ways they are represented by specific outlets (and journalists), while “offering intriguing insights into how individuals process media narratives and derive meaning from them, based on both their own prior knowledge, experiences and worldviews, and the interpersonal dialogue in which they engage with fellow audience-members” (Morrison, 2018, p.15).

From a liberal perspective, the comments are a sign of the deep globalization of information sources. They belong to a new period of deliberative digital democracy (Dahlberg, 2011, p.87). Comment sections accompanying news stories may offer a favorable discursive opportunity structure for the recurring expression of media trust-undermining views – they are not restricted by the gatekeeping mechanisms of established media, are often algorithmically curated, and afford anonymity to (in)authentic commenters (Dobber & Hameleers, 2024, p.2). While there are some guardrails provided by law (e.g., hate speech is illegal in the European Union), users are generally free to respond not only to any other user but also to formerly fewer approachable institutions such as news media (Dobber & Hameleers, 2024, p.4).

Therefore, in today’s world, the power of media political discourse is no longer restricted to meaning-making processes. Newspapers “have the capability of engaging readers through interactive comment forums, a communicative space where citizens can, in principle, exercise power, creating and sustaining an identity as participating members in political processes” (Pinto-Coelho et al., 2019, p.733). This creates a sense of belonging among online readers. Comment threads are important because they allow those with relevant knowledge and/or experience to *contribute to narratives*, not just respond to them, by adding evidence-based posts that confirm what a journalist has reported, qualify it with a more balanced or nuanced account, or even contradict the published one (Morrison, 2018, p.15). User-generated content in the form of comments constitutes

a way of capturing the degree of the users' commitment with the news, since, when choosing to leave a contribution below a story, the user is showing an interest in its content, the newspaper's brand and the deliberative component of such interaction (Parra et al., 2020, p.87). Today's growing pervasiveness of user comment threads in news content is viewed as audience empowerment – allowing the audience to engage in peer-to-peer debate and information-sharing and actively contribute to narratives around which their dialogue revolves (Morrison, 2018, p.17–18).

The growing pervasiveness of user comment threads in news content has caused the increase in the studies of comments. Over the past two decades, the number of studies focusing on news-related user comments has exploded, which caused the necessity of their analysis and systematization. A brief survey of the works that study user comments and systematize such studies (Stroud et al., 2016; Mathe & Caldwell 2017; Gwon et al., 2020; Szabo et al., 2021; Aldous et al., 2023; Neuman et al., 2023; Kubin et al., 2024 among others) allows for defining such major research directions:

- (i) What is commented (modality: text vs. moving image; types of content in news media; how the type of the commented text influences comments; how news shape commenting; how they shape commentors' opinion).
- (ii) What is in comments (the themes of comments; the feelings of commentors towards specific topics, positive-negative comments; relatedness of the comments to the news content).
- (iii) Who comments (demographics of comments; commentors' bias).
- (iv) What triggers comments (what community factors correlate with commenting).
- (v) How commentors comment (style of comments across news platforms; discursive strategies; the use of narratives, facts, and data within comments; commenting behavior; incivility; how commenting evolves; how comments shape further commenting via controversy).
- (vi) Effect of comments (how they shape others' attitudes).

In the diverse landscape of the comment research, the current study immediately relates to the two major issues – what is commented (what information in the news text evokes commenting), and what is in comments (relation of the comments to the news content, emotivity of comments). Some of the other issues (how commenting evolves, and the impact of community factors on commenting) are mentioned as attendant secondary issues. Methodologically, the current study develops content analysis via grounding it on a cognitive ontology of the processed data – the approach which is specified below.

3. Methodology and data

The methodological framework employed in this study complies with several working hypotheses as to the intertextual interplay of the political article (news media narrative) and the readers' responses.

Working hypothesis 1. The content of a political media narrative may be marshalled with a cognitive ontology, or particular homogeneous information which has been specifically arranged. The content to be structured prompts the choice in between the *relational ontology* (that demonstrates the kinds of relations between the entities), *entity-based ontology* (that represents an entity as an information 'nucleus' with its 'satellites'), and *event-based ontology* (that characterizes several entities with regard to some time-bound 'event') (Zhabotynska, 2020).

If the narrative describes an 'event', its *event-based ontology* displays an information space divided into *thematic domains* (the thematically homogeneous sub-spaces of the information space). In an event-based ontology, the domains are defined with regard to the invariable referents whose iteration provides the referential coherence of the narrative text. A thematic domain comprises the information about an invariable in its relation to the event. An invariable may be an actor, an object or the event itself considered in its integrity. A domain is constituted by *thematic parcels* as its information focuses. In an event-based ontology, the parcels are typically distinguished in the domains representing a collective invariable with its constituents specified in the parcels; e.g., the

domain of a country may include the parcels ‘country’ considered as a whole, ‘people’, ‘government’, ‘president’, etc. Each parcel (or domain, if it does not disintegrate into parcels, or thus has only one parcel) subsumes *thematic quanta* that generalize the information available in the descriptions of the analyzed text. A *textual description*, as an empirical unit of the analysis, contains one proposition – an elementary conceptual structure consisting of the logical subject (the target concept) and the logical predicate (the property of the target) (Zhabotynskaya, 2017; Zhabotynska & Velivchenko, 2019; Chaban et al., 2023). The thematic quanta subsumed by a parcel shape a schematic *micronarative* that molds the parcel’s content.

The number of the textual descriptions featuring a thematic quantum defines its *salience* – factual and emotive. Respectively, the salience of a parcel depends on the number of textual descriptions in all its thematic quanta; and the salience of a domain depends on the number of textual descriptions in all its parcels.

The above principles of building an event-based cognitive ontology are applicable to the arrangement of the information in both the news media text and the readers’ comments to this text.

Working hypothesis 2. The constituents of a cognitive ontology developed for a *multimodal media narrative* tend to be projected verbally and visually. The visual images, which contribute to the verbal content, may be (a) neutral, irrespective of the verbal text in which they are used; (b) explicitly connoted as positive or negative, irrespective of the verbal text in which they are used; and (c) implicitly connoted as positive or negative due to the verbal text in which they are used (Chaban et al., 2019-2020; Zhabotynska & Ryzhova 2022; Zhabotynska & Chaban, 2024 among others). Visual images add factual salience to the information delivered verbally. As to the emotive load (/0/ neutral, /+/ positive or /-/ negative), visual images may intensify, amplify or contradict the information featured verbally.

Working hypothesis 3. The thematic nodes of the cognitive ontology that structures a media image have the *hooking capacity*, or the ability to evoke the readers’ responses to the respective information. The hooking capacity may be *zero* (no readers’ responses), *low*, *mid*, and *high* (pertaining to the number of the readers’ responses). The hooking capacity demonstrated by a narrative issue depends / does not depend on the salience of this issue depicted verbally and visually.

Working hypothesis 4. The types of interaction between the content of the readers’ comments and the content of the media narrative proper are (Zhabotynska & Slyvka 2020; Zhabotynska & Ryzhova 2022 among others):

- *accentuation* ($X1 \leftarrow X1$): the comments repeat the idea of the narrative;
- *elaboration* ($X1 \leftarrow X1$): the comments add a new detail to the same idea;
- *extension* ($X \leftarrow Y$): the comments add a new idea contiguous and congruent with that in the narrative; e.g. TEXT: cause \rightarrow COMMENTS: consequence;
- *questioning* ($X \leftrightarrow Y$): the comments add a new idea, which elaborates or extends the previous one via ‘no’ or ‘but’ incongruence, i.e. denial, doubt, impossibility or contrast; e.g., TEXT: cause \rightarrow COMMENTS: ‘but’ consequence;
- *combining* ($X \& Y$): the comments add a new idea noncontiguous with that in the narrative; e.g., the events separated in time and space.

Accentuation, elaboration, extension, and combining are ‘boosters’ which are consonant with the previous content, while questioning is a dissonant ‘booster’.

Working hypothesis 5. The content of the readers responses (the comments and their ‘likes’) creates the Response Information Space (RIS) diagnostic of the public opinion. Besides its own cognitive ontology, compatible with the ontology of the media narrative, the RIS has its ‘discourse route’ shaped by the configuration of the content boosters. The consonance / dissonance of the RIS with the media narrative is defined with regard to the RIS’s discourse routes, and the salience exhibited by the nodes of the RIS’s ontology.

The above hypotheses are tested in a pilot study of the *dataset* represented by the text of the political article “*Why Russia’s war in Ukraine could run for years*” followed by lead *From Moscow to Washington, a lack of clear and achievable strategic goals points* (Walker, 2023), and the readers’ responses to this article. Published on August 20, 2023 in *The Wall Street Journal*, one of the reputable American media outlets, the article discusses a strategically important issue – the politics of the West/US as to the Russian-Ukrainian war. This issue remains topical till present. The article, which is 1492 words long, incorporates 8 visual images – 7 photos and one map. The article is followed by the declared 1512 responses, which, when thoroughly examined, can be reduced to 63 comments with 627 ‘likes’. The text of the comments is 4114 words long, or nearly thrice as long as the media text per se, which testifies to the topic’s relevance for the readers. The readers not only respond to the content of the article, but also initiate a discussion, getting engaged in it more than once in the comment’s ‘lifecycle’.

The quantitative disbalance between the comments proper and their ‘likes’ may be explained by the existence of comment writers and comment readers. The comment writers belong to that “handful of contributors” who “enrich and encourage a lively debate” (Parra et al., 2020, p. 87). According to Straud et al. (2016, p. 16), although the majority of American adult population leave comments, only a small percentage – 14% – comment on the news. The comment readers, who sufficiently prevail over comment writers, read comments “to learn about the opinions of others and to be entertained or amused by others’ comments” (Mathe & Caldwell, 2009, p. 58). It is comment readers, who leave their ‘likes’ and thus participate in the discussion covertly.

4. Analysis

The article “*Why Russia’s war in Ukraine could run for years*” (Walker, 2023) portrays an event – Russian-Ukrainian war; therefore, its media image may be organized as an event-based ontology. The four domains of this ontology, defined with regard to the narrative’s invariables, are WAR (parcel: War), UKRAINE (parcels: Ukraine, Ukrainian army), RUSSIA (parcels: Russia, Russian army, President Putin), and WEST / US (parcel West / US) – Figure 1.

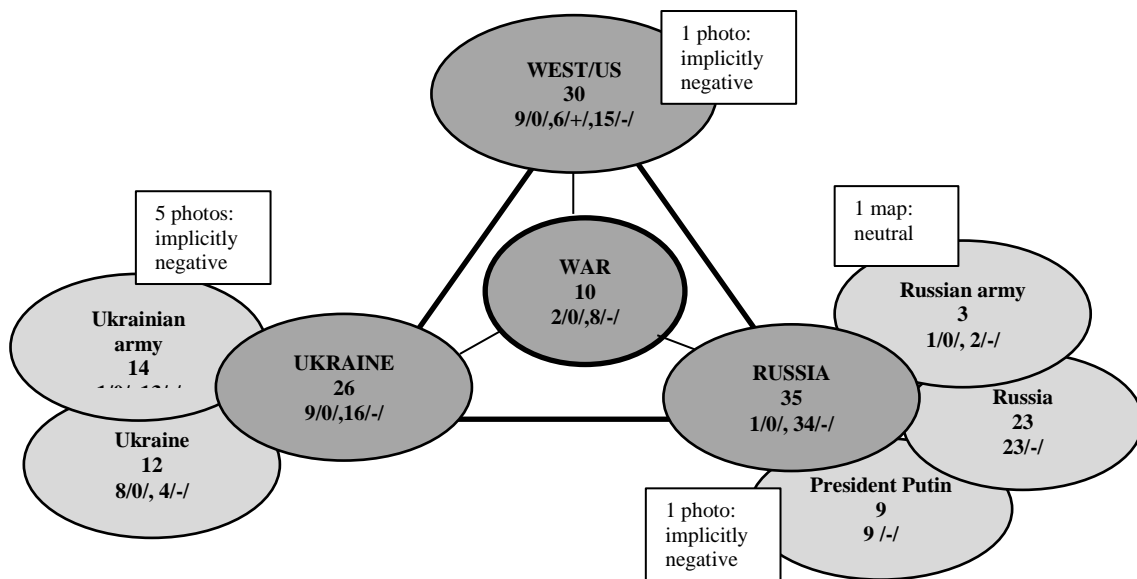


Fig.1. The RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR media image: a cognitive ontology.

Figure 1 demonstrates the factual end emotive salience of the domains and their parcels, which is created verbally and visually. The most salient domain is RUSSIA, featured with 35 textual descriptions (td), most of which are negative, and two visual images (one photo and one map). Then come the WEST / US and UKRAINE domains, which are equally salient. The WEST / US domain

has 30 td (neutral-negative), and the UKRAINE domain has 26 td (neutral-negative) accompanied by 5 photos. The least salient domain, WAR, has 10 td (negative).

The salience of the domains' parcels depends not only on the intensity of their verbal and visual representation, but also on the scope of the schematic micronarative featuring the parcel and comprising the thematic quanta (TQ). The latter generalize the content of the empirical textual descriptions. E.g.:

- **Ukrainian army**

The Ukrainian army has been painfully pushing to undo Russian gains [1 /-/] (*Kyiv's troops in eastern Ukraine have been pushing this summer to undo Russian gains*). **The progress of the Ukrainian army is slow [4 /-/] (*For Ukrainian forces near Bakhmut, progress has been slow in the effort to retake the eastern city; front-line combat is a slow-moving slog; Ukraine's push to retake territory has been slow. their painfully slow progress this summer*), and the losses are heavy [1 /-/] (*heavy losses throughout the war*). **The reason is Russia's huge minefields and fortified lines [3/-/] (*as its forces face a deadly problem: land mines; Russia created one of the largest minefields in the world in the occupied regions, and their impact on Kyiv's counteroffensive; Russia's fortified lines in the Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk regions*) and **Ukraine's limited and outdated weaponry [4 /-/] (*the limits of Western support; Ukrainian troops' limited weaponry; [lack of] air power and air defenses. Soviet-era weapons such as Grad rocket launchers remain a staple for Ukraine*). **The Ukrainian army waits for modern arms from Western allies [1 /0/] (*as it waits for more modern arms from Western allies*).********

The schematic micronaratives for the thematic domains and their parcels evolve as described below (the TQ that exhibit hooking capacities, i.e. evoke the readers' responses, are underlined).

- **WAR. War [10 td: 2/0/, 8/-/ > negative]. Micronarrative – 4 TQ:** The war in Ukraine is being protracted [3 /-/]. The war endangers the global economy [1 /-/]. War is continuation of policy by other means [2 /0/]. Unsuccessful wars result from the lack of an achievable political aim [4 /-/].
- **UKRAINE. Ukrainian army [14 td: 1/0/, 13/-/ > negative]. Micronarrative – 6 TQ:** The Ukrainian army has been painfully pushing to undo Russian gains [1/-/]. The progress of the Ukrainian army is slow [4/-/] HOOK, and the losses are heavy [1/-/] HOOK. The reason is Russia's huge minefields and fortified lines [3/-/] and Ukraine's limited and outdated weaponry [4 /-/]. Ukrainian army waits for modern arms from Western allies [1 /0/]. **Visual images – 5 photos /-/** which, being neutral, are implicitly connoted as negative due to the negative verbal text in which they are used. In the pictures, single actors and single pieces of transportation and weaponry resonate with the idea of the Ukrainian army's slow progress.



Photo:
Emanuele Satolli
for The WSJ



Photo:
Serhii Kirovayny
for The WSJ



Photo:
Manu Bravo
for The WSJ



Photo:
Manu Bravo
for The WSJ



Photo:
Manu
Bravo
for The WSJ

(Walker, 2023).

- **UKRAINE. Ukraine [12 td: 8/0/, 4/-/ > negative-neutral]. Micronarrative – 5 TQ:** Ukraine has a maximalist aim of restoring its territorial integrity [4 /0/]. Ukraine refuses to negotiate peace without a battlefield breakthrough [1 /0/]. Ukraine dismisses the proposal to give up Russian-occupied territory [3 /0/]. The achievement of Ukraine’s maximalist political goals is hardly attainable [3 -/-], which can make the war endless [1 -/-].
- **RUSSIA. Russian army [3 td: 1/0/, 2/-/ > neutral-negative]. Micronarrative – 2 TQ:** Russian army has gains [1 /0/] HOOK. It has created huge minefields and fortified lines that had an impact on Ukraine’s counteroffensive [2 -/-]. **Visual image – one military map /0/** which is neutral, being linked to the neutral quantum “Russian army has gains”.



Source: Institute for the Study of War and AEI’s Critical Threats Project (Walker, 2023).

- **RUSSIA. Russia [23 td: 23/-/ > negative]. Micronarrative – 7 TQ:** Russia’s aims in this war elastic, ranging from ambitious imperial schemes to more limited land grabs [7/-/] HOOK. These aims are shifting with Russia’s military fortunes [5/-/]. Russia has an unrealistic long-term imperial objective to bring Ukraine back under Moscow’s sway [1/-/] HOOK. For Russia, this war is a costly and dangerous quagmire [5/-/] HOOK. But Russia thinks the cost of the war is manageable [2/-/]. Without Ukraine’s battlefield breakthrough, Russia doesn’t have to negotiate peace [1/-/].
- **RUSSIA. President Putin [9 td: 9/-/ > negative]. Micronarrative – 6 TQ:** Putin has a big imperial vision of Russia [2/-/] HOOK. Putin speaks as if the war has largely fulfilled its aim [1/-/] HOOK. Meanwhile, Putin’s goals are fluid [1/-/] HOOK, and his policy depends on where his soldiers are [3/-/]. Unclear goals allow him to say he is going towards them [1/-/] HOOK. Putin may treat smaller gains as a way to any treacherous peace based on concessions [1/-/]. **Visual image – one photo -/-** which is explicitly negative, and which amplifies the negativity of the verbal text.

A pillow bearing an image of Russian President Vladimir Putin at the home of a collector of war memorabilia in the Ukrainian city of Pavlohrad. Photo: Emanuele Satolli for the WSJ (Walker, 2023).



- **WEST / US [30 td: 9/0/, 6/+/, 15/-/ > neutral-negative]. Micronarratives – 7 TQ:** The West helps Ukraine with quality weapons [4/+/], but the Western support is limited [5/-/]. The West wants to prevent Russia from winning [1 +/-], but it fears the risks of helping Ukraine and pushing Putin to using nuclear weapons [4 /0/]. The Western allies don’t think they can leave it to Ukraine alone to

define the goals of this war [1/0/], but they sketch bargains to end the war, which do not fit either Ukraine's or Russia's goals [5 /-]. The West disbelieves that Ukraine can fully expel Russian forces [1/0/], and it is uncertain about its voters' further support of the aid to Ukraine [1/0/]. The West / US aims to put Ukraine in a strong position for peace negotiation [1/+], but the time and conditions of negotiations are unknown [2/0/]. The West / US makes the conflict drawn-out, which weakens Ukraine and makes negotiations hardly possible [3/-]. In this war, the West's political strategy is not clear [2/-] HOOK. **Visual image – one photo /-/,** which, being neutral, is implicitly connoted as negative due to its clash with the verbal text: the photo ironically alludes to the US President Biden being an 'omnipotent saint' who, however, is unable to solve the problem.



President Biden is seeking to support Ukraine's war effort without prompting a dangerous escalation Photo: Andrew Caballero-Reynolds / Agence France-Presse / Getty Images (Walker, 2023).

As the analysis shows, the factual and emotive salience of the parcels decreases in the direction: West/US (7 TQ /30 td / one photo; neutral-negative), Russia (7 TQ / 23 td; negative), Ukrainian army (6 TQ / 14 td / 5 photos; negative), Ukraine (5 TQ / 12 td; positive-neutral), President Putin (6 TQ / 9 td / 1 photo; negative), War (4 TQ / 10 td; negative), Russian army (1 TQ / 3 td / one map; neutral-negative). Among the 7 narrative invariables portrayed in the parcels only 5 get attention in the readers' responses. Such responses, while fitting the thematic parcels of the media narrative, develop their own thematic quanta. E.g.:

- **Ukrainian army**

MEDIA NARRATIVE: **The progress of the Ukrainian army is slow [3/-].**

← READERS' RESPONSES: **Its counter-attack was barely noticeable [2 /-]:** ⁸³ 🇺🇸 Joseph Breton: despite the claims that the Ukrainians would easily oust them with their counter-offensive, which turned out to be barely noticeable. Meanwhile, Ukrainian army has had many achievements and few lost battles [2 /+]: ⁵ 🇺🇸 Peter Nemeth: Ukraine's successful counter-offensive last year; sinking of ships.

MEDIA NARRATIVE: **The losses of the Ukrainian army are heavy [1 /-].**

← READERS' RESPONSES: **The losses are heavy [1/-]:** ⁸³ 🇺🇸 Joseph Breton: Only in the last few weeks have media propagandists described Ukraine's losses as 'heavy'. They have been heavy all the time [1/-]: ⁸³ 🇺🇸 Joseph Breton: though it was clear they've been getting pummeled badly the whole time. The losses are not that heavy [1/+]: ⁵ 🇺🇸 Peter Nemeth: Ukraine's forces aren't pummeled badly. They have not been heavy all the time [2/+]: ⁵ 🇺🇸 Peter Nemeth: and were certainly not pummeled the whole time. ⁵ 🇺🇸 Peter Nemeth: this is plain Russian propaganda. Ukraine has advancement in its native weapon's technology [4/+]: ⁶ 🇺🇸 Samuel Hodder: Putin had to invade and his goal was (is) to occupy all of Ukraine. Ukraine's growing economy and technology advancement would make it impossible for Russian to do so in five more years. Ukraine's own advancement in their native weapon's technology and the ability to produce it was jump started after 2014 invasion. Putin's clock was ticking.

The questions that arise as to the interplay of the two texts – the one of the media narrative and the one of the readers’ responses to it – are at least three: (1) Does the degree of the salience exhibited by the invariables in the media narrative influence their hooking capacity (readers responses)? (2) How does the text of the readers’ comments develop the text of the media narrative? (3) To what extent are these two texts concurrent?

The correlation between the salience of the media text invariables and the readers’ responses that they evoke is shown in Table 1.

Table 1.

**Factual salience of the media text invariables
and the readers’ responses that they evoke**

Invariables (thematic parcels): decreasing salience	Media narrative			Readers’ responses		Hooking capacity of an invariable
	Number of TQ/td	Number of visual images	Number of TQ/td with a hook	Number of TQ/td	Number of likes	
1. West / US	7/30	1	1/1	7/40	102	Mid-to-high
2. Russia	7/23	-	4/15	18/81	150	High
3. Ukrainian army	6/14	5	2/6	7/15	88	Mid-to-low
4. Ukraine	5/12	-	-	-	-	-
5. President Putin	6/9	1	4/5	25/73	184	High
6. War	4/10	-	-	-	-	-
7. Russian army	1/1	1	1/1	9/20	103	Mid
Total	36/99	8	12/28	66/229	627	

The numbers in Table 1 entail several conclusions.

First, only one third of the information delivered in the media narrative is reacted to in the readers’ responses (36 TQ / 99 td :: 12 TQ / 28 td), which shows to what extent the text is ‘catchy’ for the readers.

Second, that part of the narrative’s content, which gets the readers’ attention, demonstrates their sufficient sensitivity to the respective topics: the readers develop them in-depth in the proportion 12 :: 66 TQ and 28 :: 229 td, or one TQ of the media narrative extends in 5-6 TQ in the comments; and one td of the media narrative evolves in 8 td in the comments.

Third, the discussion marshalled in the readers comments has the resonance 1::10 (63 actual comments have 627 likes), which exhibits the readers’ high involvement with the discussed issues.

Finally, the hooking capacity of the narrative’s invariables does not directly depend on their salience in the text. According to Table 1, the high hooking capacity is demonstrated by the invariables ‘Russia’ and ‘President Putin’, with the latter being closer to the end in the salience list. Similarly, the invariable ‘West/US’, which is at the top of this list, has mid-to-high hooking capacity. Presumably, the hooking capacity of the verbally featured media issues depends on the reader’s interpretation basis (presuppositions) rather than on the media narrative proper. This finding supports the observation that “readers comments reflect vibrant political activity” (Mathe & Calwell, 2017, p. 60) as a community factor. Meanwhile, the analysis shows that the hooking capacity of an issue in the news media narrative may be latently prompted by the visual means. In the considered article, visual images support all verbal messages defined as ‘hooks’. However, this assumption should be tested on a larger corpus of data.

In this study, the interaction between the information in the narrative text and the information in the readers’ comments is considered in terms of such content boosters as *accentuation* (the comments repeat the idea of the narrative), *elaboration* (the comments add a new detail to the same idea), *extension* (the comments add a new idea contiguous and congruent with that in the narrative), *questioning* (the comments add a new idea, incongruent with that in the narrative), and *combining* (the comments add a new idea noncontiguous with that in the narrative). The configuration of the

content boosters molds the discourse routes in the micronarratives that feature the parcels of the Response Information Space (RIS) constituted by the readers' comments and 'likes':

(1) **Ukrainian army. Media micronarrative:** The progress of the Ukrainian army is slow [3/-/]. ← **RIS micronarrative:** ELABORATION: Its counter-attack was barely noticeable [2/-/]. < **QUESTIONING:** But the Ukrainian army has had many achievements and few lost battles [2+/].

[MEDIA TEXT – 3 td /-/ ← RIS – 4 td: ⁸³ 2 /-/ **consonant**; ⁵ 2 /+/ dissonant]

(2) **Ukrainian army. Media micronarrative:** The losses of the Ukrainian army are heavy [1 /-/]. ← **RIS micronarrative:** ACCENTUATION: The losses are heavy [1/-/]. ELABORATION: They have been heavy all the time [1/-/]. < **QUESTIONING:** The losses are not that heavy [3+/]. They have not been heavy all the time [2+/]. EXTENSION: Ukraine has advancement in its native weapon's technology [4+/].

[MEDIA TEXT – 11 td /-/ ← RIS – 11 td: ⁸⁸ 2 /-/ **consonant**; ⁵ 9 /+/ dissonant]

(3) **Russian army. Media micronarrative:** Russian army has gains [1 /0/] ← **RIS micronarrative:** EXTENSION. Russian army is not incompetent [1+/]. It has taken what it came for [1+/]. And it will not be dislodged by force [1+/]. It has a military strategy [2+/]. < **QUESTIONING:** Russian army's gains are few [1/-/]. Russian army is incompetent and ancient [8/-/]. ELABORATION: But Russian soldiers are dangerous [1/-/]. They are taught to die for their evil leaders [4/-/]. COMBINING: Another marvel of Russian competence was demonstrated today on the moon [1/-/].

[MEDIA TEXT 1 – td /0/ ← RIS – ¹⁰³ 20 td: ⁸⁴ 5 /+/ **consonant**; ¹⁹ 15 /-/ dissonant]

(4) **President Putin. Media micronarrative:** Putin has a big imperial vision of Russia [2 /-/]. ← **RIS micronarrative:** **QUESTIONING:** No, he hasn't; Putin is not trying to reconstruct a new USSR [2+/]. ELABORATION: Nobody knows; his goal may be limited to Eastern Ukraine [3+/]. EXTENSION: He doesn't want to install a puppet government in Ukraine [2+/]. < **QUESTIONING:** Yes, he desires to build a new USSR [2/-/]. ELABORATION: He is doing it both through diplomacy and military aggression [6/-/].

[MEDIA TEXT – 12 td /-/ ← RIS – ²⁷ 15 td: ⁵ 7 /+/ dissonant; ²² 8 /-/ **consonant**]

(5) **President Putin. Media micronarrative:** Putin's goals are fluid [1/-/]. Unclear goals allow him to say he is going towards them [1/-/]. ← **RIS micronarrative:** **QUESTIONING:** He has a particular goal to stop NATO expanding to Russia's borders [1+/]. ELABORATION: Putin's concern is shared by numerous Russians [2+/]. We should consider this concern as important [2+/]. < **QUESTIONING:** False – NATO is only an excuse for his deplorable actions, since Russia has borders with NATO countries [5/-/]. ELABORATION: Putin knows that NATO poses no military threat to Russia [8/-/].

[MEDIA TEXT – 2 td /-/ ← RIS – ⁹ 18 td: ⁵ 5 /+/ dissonant; ⁴ 13 /-/ **consonant**]

(6) **President Putin. Media micronarrative:** Putin speaks as if the war has largely fulfilled its aim [1 /-/]. ← **RIS micronarrative:** **QUESTIONING:** Putin's victories are a land bridge to Crimea and killing Ukraine's Neo-Nazi Azov Battalion in Mariupol [2+/]. ELABORATION: Putin has never lost a war, and he will win in Ukraine [2+/]. EXTENSION: He may miscalculate, but why argue with a bear? [2+/]. < **QUESTIONING:** He is far from obtaining what he wanted [1/-/]. He is unable to win in Ukraine [1/-/]. The bear is diseased and crippled [1/-/]. ELABORATION: His aggression led to the new NATO countries on the Russian border [8/-/], to the increase of Western countries' military budgets [3/-/], to the drop of Europe's dependence on Russian energy [2/-/], to providing Ukraine with modern Western weapons [2/-/], to Ukraine's long-lasting fury and hatred against Russia [1/-/], and to the program of de-Russification in Ukraine and Eastern Europe [2 /-/].

EXTENSION: The situation is beyond Putin's control [9/-/]. All he has done is weaken Russia and his own political position [1/-/]. Putin's seizure of Ukrainian territory by military force is unjustified and, if not stopped, he may go further [3/-/].

[MEDIA TEXT – 1 td /-/ ← RIS – ¹⁴⁵ 40 td: ⁹ 6/+/ dissonant; ¹³⁹ 34/-/ **consonant**]

(7) Russia. Media micronarrative: Russia's aims in this war are elastic, ranging from ambitious imperial schemes to more limited land grabs [7/-/]. Russia has an unrealistic long-term imperial objective to bring Ukraine back under Moscow's sway [1/-/]. ← **RIS micronarrative:**

QUESTIONING: The aim as to the seizure of the valuable land has been fulfilled [12/+/]. EXTENSION: China will help Russia to use the seized natural resources in the future [4/+/] < **QUESTIONING:** Russian territorial gains occurred before the invasion [1/-/]. The seized areas will become a wasteland [5/-/]. Russians have failed to achieve their goals in this war [16/-/].

[MEDIA TEXT – 8 td /-/ ← RIS – ⁴³ 38 td: ¹⁹ 16/+/ dissonant; ²⁴ 22/-/ **consonant**]

(8) Russia. Media micronarrative: Russia's aims in this war are unclear [2/-/]. ← **RIS micro**

narrative: QUESTIONING: The particular aim is to stop the threat of NATO's expanding to Russia's borders [2/+/]. ELABORATION: Russia will never allow Ukraine's military alliance with hostile NATO which is an aggressive organization used by the US in its globalist foreign policy [6/+/]. EXTENSION: Russia was scared by Ukraine's intention to join NATO voiced in its constitution [2/+/]. Russia considered Zelensky to be an immature leader to cope with this situation [1/+/]. COMBINING: Russia remembered that Hitler and Napoleon invaded it through Ukraine [1/+/]. < **QUESTIONING:** Russia lies, since NATO didn't and doesn't want Ukraine to join [5/-/]. Russia knows that neither NATO nor Ukraine are aggressors [2/-/]. The aggressor is Russia [3/-/]. EXTENSION: Russia ignored its signed commitment to respect the Ukrainian sovereignty and borders [1/-/]. Russia has a long history of imperial aggression [8/-/]. This aggression [3/-/] has caused the emergence and expansion of NATO as a defensive organization.

[MEDIA TEXT – 2 td /-/ ← RIS – ⁹² 34 td: ²⁴ 12/+/ dissonant; ⁶⁸ 22/-/ **consonant**]

(9) Russia. Media micronarrative: For Russia, this war is a costly and dangerous quagmire [5/-/].

← **RIS micronarrative: QUESTIONING:** The economic situation in Russia remains steady [2 /+/. < **QUESTIONING:** The Russian economy is slowly being straitened under sanctions [7/-/].

[MEDIA TEXT – 5 td /-/ ← RIS – ¹⁵ 9 td: ⁴ 2/+/ dissonant; ¹¹ 7/-/ **consonant**]

(10) West / US. Media micronarrative: In this war, the West's political strategy is not clear [2/-/].

← **RIS micronarrative:** EXTENSION: Western politics provoked the war and failed to prevent it [6/-/]. ELABORATION: The US has drawn Ukraine in its sphere of influence [1/-/]. The West has been pushing NATO up to Russian borders for decades in spite of Russia's strong objections [6/-/]. In this war, the US is not fighting Ukraine's occupation, but pursues its own political and economic goals [5/-/]. This war is entirely on Biden and his failed politics as to Putin [12/-/]. Biden fails to stop illegal economic and military support of Russia

[MEDIA TEXT – 2 td /-/ ← RIS – ¹⁰² 40 td: ¹⁰² 40/-/ **consonant**]


















With the exception of RIS micronarrative (10), all other RIS micronarratives incorporate *questioning* into their discourse routes, which means that the RIS in toto is highly polemical. The polemics is primarily addressed to the issues of the media text: in micronarratives (3) through (9), questioning is employed at the very beginning of the discourse route. In micronarratives (1) and (2), questioning concerns both the media text proper, and its consonant comments. Meanwhile, in most cases questioning-1 is followed by questioning-2, which means that, by contradicting the comments dissonant with the issues of the media text, the readers get consonant with these issues – see micronarratives (3) through (9).

The survey of content boosters prompts a quick suggestion that their types may add some other characteristics to the RIS. While questioning is iterated in it 13 times, the other content boosters are used less frequently: elaboration – 11 times, extension – 7 times, combining – 2 times, and accentuation – 1 time. The prevalence of elaboration (adding a new detail to the same fact) and extension (adding a new contiguous fact) agrees with the assertion that the media sets the discussion agenda, and the readers do not further discuss beyond the agenda set by the media (Miloni et al. 2012).

The configuration of the content boosters in the RIS micronarratives is only one of the factors that is pivotal for identifying this RIS as consonant or dissonant with the media text. Another factor is the salience of the thematic quanta as the micronarratives’ constituents. Such salience depends on the number of textual descriptions subsumed by the thematic quanta, and the number of ‘likes’ obtained by the quanta. These two parameters are showcased in Table 2, where emotive salience (/-/ and +/-) coincides with the factual salience of the thematic quanta.

Table 2

Concurrence of the Response Information Space and the media narrative

Invariable (thematic parcel)	Media narrative		Response Information Space (RIS)			
	Number of td	Emotivity	Number of td and likes	Dissonant td and likes	Consonant td and likes	Prevailing concurrence
President Putin	5 td	/-/	184  73	19  18 +/-	165  55 -/-	Consonant -/-
Russia	8 td	/-/	150  81	47  30 +/-	103  51 -/-	Consonant -/-
Russian army	1 td	/0/	103  20	19  15 -/-	84  5 +/-	Consonant /0<+/-
Ukrainian army	4 td	/-/	88  15	5  12 +/-	83  4 -/-	Consonant -/-
West / US	2 td	/-/	102  40	--	102  40 -/-	Consonant -/-
Total	20 td	/-/	627  229	155  65 +/-	472  165 -/-	Consonant -/-

The data of Table 2 provide evidence in favor of the prevailing consonant concurrence of the RIS with the media narrative as a whole and with its particular invariables. For the whole RIS, the number of consonant comments exceeds the number of dissonant comments 2.5 times, and the ‘likes’ for the consonant comment are thrice as numerous as the ‘likes’ for the dissonant comments.

The conducted analysis warrants several conclusions and triggers the discussion of their theoretical and practical implications.

5. Concluding discussion

A characteristic trait of the modern news media is their interaction with the readers that typically exists in the form of the readers’ comments to the political narrative, and the ‘likes’ to these comments. In the ‘life’ of a political media narrative, strategic narrative in particular, the readers responses represent the ‘receptive stage’. The methodology of its analysis should be compatible with that employed for the analysis of ‘formation’ and ‘projection’ stages in the narrative’s lifecycle, as it is described in (Miskimmon et al., 2013; 2017). The methodological framework proposed in this study for the exploration of readers’ responses to a political media narrative is grounded on the cognitive linguistics findings concerned with building cognitive ontologies of the information delivered verbally and visually in a multimodal text. A cognitive ontology structures

homogeneous information in different ways, one of which is provided by an event-based ontology. In it, the analyzed information disintegrates into thematic domains, which split into thematic parcels that include thematic quanta, or generalized narrative formulae that subsume the particular meanings of the descriptions in an empirical text. In an event-based ontology, most applicable for the content of political news, the domains showcase the information about the invariables, or the main ‘collective actors’ of the text. The domain’s parcels specify these actors, and the thematic quanta shape the schematic micronarratives that describe them in their relation to the event. With the idea of the cognitive ontology as foundational, this research formulated several hypotheses which have been tested and confirmed in a pilot study of a political article followed by a considerable number of readers responses – comments and ‘likes’.

Initially, it was presumed that the content of the media narrative arranged according to an event-based ontology has the constituents with different degrees of factual and emotive salience provided verbally and visually. Having established these constituents, this study asked whether the salient constituents were the ones that ‘hooked’ the readers’ attention. The answer was ‘No’. The hooking capacity of a constituent is rather dependent on the readers’ presuppositions shaped by the current political context. However, the visual images of a multimodal media text seem to be relevant for the hooking capacity of the topics which these images support. The relation between the number of constituents in the cognitive ontology of a political narrative and the number of constituents with a hooking capacity demonstrates the ‘catchiness’ of the text for the readers.

It was presumed that the part of the political narrative’s ontology that gets the attention of the readers interacts with the Response Information Space (RIS) along several lines. First, the readers’ comments develop the issues of the media narrative via the ‘content boosters’ of accentuation, elaboration, extension, questioning and combining. Second, the configuration of the boosters’ sequence creates the ‘discourse route’ along which the readers’ comments evolve. Third, if the RIS abounds in discourse routes with the booster of questioning, the readers’ comments are defined as polemical. In the research, all these presumptions have been confirmed.

The final suggestion concerned the technology for exposing the concurrence of the media narrative and its RIS with regard to their consonance or dissonance. This technology considered both the configuration of the discourse routes in the RIS, and the salience of its narrative issues, which is exposed through the number of the textual descriptions in the readers’ comments and the number of ‘likes’ to them. The developed technology, applied in the analysis of the empirical data, has proved to be feasible. It enables the presentation the formally and semantically haphazard RIS as a comprehensive and coherent whole whose information structure can be compared with that of the media narrative.

This study, being methodologically oriented, proposes the novel tools applicable in the queries that pursue theoretical and practical objectives. When applied in the theoretical interdisciplinary domain of multimodality and intertextuality, these tools help to expose regularities in the interplay of the political narrative projected in a multimodal media text, and the readers’ narrative response to this text – the issues topical for political narratology as the field of expertise in both linguistic and political studies. The practical application of the proposed methodological tools extends into the domains of political analytics and journalism. Meanwhile, “being interdisciplinary is not a matter of cherry-picking concepts, but a set of skills – collaboration, knowing how to learn from others, being flexible about one’s approaches, and presenting knowledge from your own field clearly” (Miskimmon et al 2017, p. 3). These requirements suggest *further methodological improvements* of the proposed research framework, which has also to be tested on larger scope of data.

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РЕЦЕПЦІЯ ПОЛІТИЧНОГО НОВИННОГО НАРАТИВУ У ЧИТАЦЬКИХ ВІДГУКАХ: МУЛЬТИМОДАЛЬНІСТЬ І ІНТЕРТЕКСТУАЛЬНІСТЬ

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Анотація

Розроблена у сфері міжнародних відносин, теорія стратегічного нарративу (Miskimmon et al., 2013; 2017 та ін.) визначає його як засіб, за допомогою якого політичні суб'єкти конструюють спільні смисли у міжнародній політиці й формують світогляд, переконання і поведінку внутрішніх і зовнішніх політичних гравців і суспільних кіл. Автори теорії стверджують, що пояснення функціонування стратегічного нарративу передбачає вивчення стадій його формування, проекції та рецепції. Пошук такого пояснення об'єднує різні галузі досліджень, спрямовані на розроблення методології, що уможливило б розуміння того, як формування, проекція та рецепція стратегічного нарративу співпрацюють разом і формують єдиний триптих. Пропонована стаття розглядає цю проблему з точки зору когнітивної лінгвістики, яка вивчає концептуальні засади вербалізованої інформації. Стаття пропонує і тестує нову методологічну концепцію, базовану на застосуванні когнітивної онтології, що структурує вербально і візуально представлену інформацію. Когнітивна онтологія уможливило б відстеження закономірностей в одночасній динаміці трьох нарративних аспектів. У фокусі статті перебуває проекційно-рецептивний аспект, представлений у тексті медіановин і реакціях читачів на них – питання, актуальне для лінгвістики інтертекстуальності. Методологічно та тематично стаття продовжує попередні дослідження (Zhabotynska & Velivchenko, 2019; Zhabotynska & Ryzhova, 2022; Chaban et al. 2023; Chaban et al. 2024 та ін.) особливостей формування / проекції стратегічного нарративу, утіленого в мультимодальному медіатексті.

Ключові слова: когнітивна онтологія, стратегічний політичний нарратив, медіатекст, мультимодальність, рецепція нарративу, читачька реакція, інтертекстуальність.

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EVENTS

MULTIMODAL, TRANSMEDIAL, AND TRANS-EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES FOR ONLINE LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING: 2d YUFE - UKRAINE SEMINAR

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Abstract

This review explores the Second YUFE – Ukraine seminar, held from November 12th to 14th, 2024. Young Universities for the Future of Europe is a European University alliance of 10 higher education institutions. Hosted by the University Centre for Foreign Languages at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń—one of Poland’s largest state universities—and supported by the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA), the seminar marked a significant trans-European collaboration. This event brought together foreign language educators and researchers from Poland, Ukraine, Cyprus, Finland, Georgia, and Belgium, focusing on the theme of *online language teaching and learning*, which underscored its relevance.

Although multimodal and transmedial teaching and learning practices have become popular for ESL and other educational contexts, several additional questions have emerged, including the development of students’ multimodal literacy through online learning, the need for a more critical approach to the assessment of student achievements, and a focus on fostering both professional skills and cultural and social values among students.

The event centered on the application of modern multimodal and transmedial tools in teaching foreign languages and translation. These tools include digital technologies such as H5P, ChatGPT, augmented reality, artificial intelligence, as well as innovative pedagogical approaches like project-based learning and design thinking. Discussions culminated in identifying prospects for joint international projects, particularly in teaching business English (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). The proposed initiatives aim to involve students from various European partner universities in collaborative language education.

Keywords: *multimodal, transmedial, online language education, professional skills, Second YUFE–Ukraine seminar.*



1. Introduction

The last few decades, marked by rapid technological advancements, have profoundly influenced educational processes, stimulating extensive interdisciplinary research in fields such as English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English as a Second Language (ESL). Online language teaching and learning, in particular, has emerged as a critical area of exploration. The Second YUFE (Young Universities for the Future of Europe) – Ukraine seminar on cooperation in online language education served as a dynamic platform for university practitioners, researchers, and students to share their experiences, address challenges, and explore future strategies for ESP and ESL teaching and learning.

This three-day event, held from November 12th to 14th at the University Centre for Foreign Languages of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland, facilitated the exchange of ideas, best practices, and solutions for the evolving field of online foreign language education. Key topics included the integration of tools such as ChatGPT and AI, as well as the digitalization of multilingual programs in European higher education institutions. Insights from participating countries—Poland, Ukraine, Cyprus, Finland, Belgium, and Georgia—enriched the discussions, emphasizing the significance of collaborative innovation in language education.

2. Multimodality and transmediality in online education

In the 21st century, online education is becoming increasingly important. Apart from meeting the requirements of today's digitalized society, online education provides a unique opportunity to continue the educational process when offline learning is not possible, as recent European events, including COVID-19 and warfare, have shown. Education in the digital age necessitates the use of a full range of relevant semiotic resources (Early et al., 2015). Consequently, multimodality and transmediality shift from being theoretical constructs to practical tools for online teaching and learning (Fleming, 2013; Tombleson, 2024). This involves using various Internet platforms, mobile apps, social media, video games, and Artificial Intelligence, particularly ChatGPT, in the online classroom. On the one hand, this shift presents new challenges and, on the other hand, it offers new opportunities for language teaching and learning at different levels of language proficiency.

Multimodality in education (van Leeuwen, 2015) and “transmedia teaching practices” (Rodrigues & Bidarra, 2016; Sánchez-Caballé & González-Martínez, 2023) have become popular for ESL and beyond. At the same time, additional questions emerged. As van Leeuwen (2015) puts it, should educators develop students' multimodal literacy beyond entertainment where they are already proficient? Should educators take a more critical stance to students' production? Should educators focus on students' professional skills or rather cultural and social values such as “decolonized education”? These issues were addressed by the participants of the II YUFE–Ukraine workshop.

Transmedial educational experiences have attracted the interest of professionals worldwide, and at the II YUFE – Ukraine workshop; they were the subject of a two-strand discussion: online education in ESP/EAP teaching (a multimodal perspective) and in ESL translation teaching (the perspective of transmediality). In the section below, we will focus on each of these perspectives, though their separation is artificial and only intended for heuristic purposes.

3. Multimodality and transmediality in the language classroom

Most of the developments and practical ramifications of trans-European cooperation in online language teaching and learning presented at the seminar were inspired by the I YUFE – Ukraine seminar a year ago. The presentation titles listed below—intercultural projects, remedial courses, and language clubs—illustrate the variety of approaches to this problem:

- Associate Professor Dr. Liliia Sandyha, (Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine) and Assistant Professor Dr. Joanna Wińska, (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland) explained that their international collaboration began at the first YUFE-Ukraine ESP

Contact Seminar in December 2023, titled *Bridging Borders through Internationalization* and hosted by the University Centre for Foreign Languages at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland. As a result of this partnership, an online intercultural project titled *Restaurant of Your Dreams* was launched for 60 Business English students from both Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń and Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. This project provided students with a unique opportunity to enhance their presentation and negotiation skills in an international environment, express their creativity, explore a different culture, and broaden their academic and cross-cultural horizons.

- *Independent Online English Remedial Course Created with H5P: Experiences from Teachers and Students* was the focus of Katja Suvanto's presentation (University of Eastern Finland). The aim of her presentation was to introduce a completely automated, independent English remedial course for B1-B2-level students in Finland. The course was created by Katja Suvanto and Jasmin Pyöriäinen, university teachers at the Language Centre of UEF. The tool used to create this course was H5P. The speaker also noted that the automated nature of the course has certain limitations; such as the lack of oral and longer writing tasks that require teachers' input. However, according to the students and teachers, the course has been found to be helpful and effortless to use. Based on this, H5P tools can be recommended to language teachers in higher education.

- Associate Professor Dr. Olena Zhygadlo (Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv), Kamila Szczepanowska (Legal English lecturer, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń), and Olga Kadukowska (a student at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń) presented the COIL project titled *Virtual Language Club for Law Enthusiasts*. It united law students from Poland and Ukraine who volunteered to analyze the EU Cybersecurity Act and its impact on national legislation. The students developed legal analysis, intercultural communication, digital collaboration, problem-solving, and academic writing skills. Their collaborative comparison of domestic cybersecurity legislation was later published as articles in the conference materials for students and young researchers, preparing them for international legal challenges and deepening their understanding of EU and national laws.

- Associate Professor Dr. Oryslava Bryska (Ivan Franko National University of Lviv) delivered a presentation titled *Project-Based Learning for Translators' Training*, emphasizing the importance of competence-based learning. She proceeded from the importance of management and claimed that a shift towards competence-based learning made it necessary to concentrate on teaching by mocking the real-life situations and cases that the students will face in their professional career paths. Not less important is the development of transversal skills applicable in any work-related environment students might find themselves in. Project-based learning is an apt solution here. Working on a project is about coordination of communication in a team, collaborating, and planning their outcomes that requires critical thinking and creativity.

- In her engaging talk entitled *Chat GPT: a useful tool for our students ... and for us! Some practical ideas*, Dr Françoise Jammet (University of Cyprus) shared some practical examples of how ChatGPT can be a useful tool to enhance students' writing and speaking skills (both at home and in class, focusing on beginner and intermediate levels). ChatGPT can be particularly effective in helping students practice their writing and speaking skills. In addition, she briefly explored some activities (and prompts) that teachers could implement to enhance their teaching in designing creative activities, while making sure they provide long-lasting skills to the learners.

- Dr Anna Olkiewicz-Mantilla (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń) presented her vision of *Introducing Elements of Design Thinking in the ESL Classroom*. Critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication and social skills are the most highlighted twenty-first-century competencies of an innovation-driven economy. The presentation outlined the five key stages of DT—Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test—and demonstrated their application in project-based ESL activities. Benefits include fostering student engagement, enhancing language

skills, and problem-solving strategies. The author also shared tips for preparation, implementation, and assessment, illustrating how micro-projects in DT empower undergraduate students of security studies to approach the complex challenges they may encounter in their professional careers.

- Dr. Shaunna Joannidou (University of Cyprus) shared her project ***Design, Development and Implementation of AR Scenarios - Exploring our Experience and Practices in the DIMPE***. The DIMPE (Digitalization of Multilingual Programs in European Higher Education Institutions) aims to promote internationalization through the provision of quality practices and digitalization in HEIs that are carrying out or planning to introduce multilingual programs. The project seeks to deploy novel digital tools that can serve as powerful mechanisms to facilitate this challenge in promoting multilingual education. This presentation discussed the three intellectual outputs of the project and focused on the design, development, and implementation of six Augmented Reality Learning Scenarios for Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC).

- Ms. Agnieszka Pawlikowska (Legal English lecturer, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń) introduced ***Collaborative Syllabus Design for Future-Ready Administration Graduates***, emphasizing a Business-to-University (BtU) framework aimed at bridging skill gaps among Public Administration graduates entering the Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Know Your Client (KYC) sectors. The program targets second-year undergraduate students, integrating 120 hours of specialized training, including 20 hours dedicated to BtU projects. Key components include analyzing job advertisements, CV preparation, job interview practice, and thematic lectures on specialized terminology, corporate jargon, and AML/KYC processes. The latest findings revealed gaps in linguistic and conceptual readiness, which hinder graduates' recruitment, retention, and career advancement. The program emphasizes the development of sector-specific vocabulary and cross-disciplinary skills, benefiting students through enhanced job readiness, employers through reduced training needs, and universities via improved graduate profiles and partnerships. Challenges include curriculum integration, resource allocation, and equipping faculty to address future job requirements. This presentation also demonstrated how integrating specialized training into university curricula can enhance job readiness while addressing industry needs.

- Ms. Rusudan Janjibukhashvili (EFL Teacher), Dr. Inga Koniashvili (Academic English lecturer), and Ms. Mariana Menteshashvili (EFL Teacher) from Ilia State University, Tbilisi provided insights into the current state of online foreign language teaching in Georgia. Their presentation outlined potential collaborations with YUFE to develop effective ESP/ESL teaching methodologies and foster international partnerships. In particular, Ms. Ana Laitadze (EFL Teacher), addressed major cognitive and behavioral issues caused by the intervention of AI in the teaching and learning process of EFL. She argued that on the one hand, there is a cognitive issue, which refers to the usage of the AI by students as a risk to the quality of the attained knowledge. On the other hand, a behavioral issue refers to an increasing role of AI in class and at home, which undermines academic performance and involvement in students' face-to-face communication. She suggested a complex response: (1) integrating AI at all stages of an online lesson, i.e. online platforms "padlet.net" and "wordwall.net" represent user-friendly, free resources and effective tools of achieving all teaching aims and learning objectives; (2) involving students in planning the learning process by suggesting a choice of web resources at all learning stages.

Dr. Inga Koniashvili presented a talk on ***Learning Tools for Academic Writing and Effective***. In it, she showcased effective learning tools for academic writing and presentations, emphasizing the use of Padlet.net for collaborative writing. This online tool helps students brainstorm, organize, and provide peer feedback, promoting interactive learning. She also demonstrated strategies for narrowing down broad topics into focused ones, engaging presentation themes. Additionally, she highlighted the importance of having back-up activities to ensure seamless learning and make e-learning platforms support both online and offline settings. She argued that these tools and strategies are adaptable and foster a dynamic learning environment, enhancing both writing and presentation skills in any format.

Transmedial perspective in ESL was the object of analysis of Associate Professor Dr. Oksana Molchko (Ivan Franko National University of Lviv). She shared the results of *teaching English and translation/interpreting in virtual and in-person environment in the time of war*. Her MA-level Translation Practice course in Lviv University builds upon the knowledge, skills, and competencies gained during undergraduate studies, aiming to enhance these abilities at a more advanced level. It focuses on refining translation and teaching translation skills, with an emphasis on producing high-quality English in thematic projects. The course also involves the input from experienced professional translators, who share their expertise in specialized areas, fostering practical discussions among MA students. This collaborative environment encourages students to critically assess their career trajectories, whether in translation or education, guiding their professional development and future goals.

- Associate Professor Dr. Olha Hrabovetska (Ivan Franko National University of Lviv) argued that *the use of virtual reality and artificial intelligence* opens up new opportunities for translation training, however, online education has its challenges. The main problems are technical barriers, engagement and motivation of students and skill assessment. To address these issues, one may use effective Internet platforms like Zoom or MS Teams for real-time learning, Google Classroom, and Moodle for self-paced learning. Unless overly relied on, AI tools prove effective for developing translator skills. Teaching strategies include interactive classes, regular feedback loop, peer learning, role-play, and group projects. She claimed that despite the benefits of online training, a blended approach combining online (synchronous, asynchronous) and face-to-face formats, offers the most optimal solution for teaching translation.

- The presentation of Stephanie Hughes (Business English lecturer, University of Antwerp) titled *Assessing students' written work – the challenges of AI* managed to achieve three primary objectives: to analyze contemporary trends in the integration of language and technology within professional environments, to explore the challenges faced by educators in the current context of artificial intelligence (AI) and large language models (LLMs), and to investigate the complexities involved in designing and evaluating company-relevant student assignments. The presentation began with an overview of language instruction at the University of Antwerp, Belgium, providing contextual background. This was followed by a presentation of preliminary findings from a recently-conducted online survey of alumni regarding their experiences using foreign languages and AI in the workplace. The final section of the presentation concentrated on strategies currently in use in the second-year English for Business and Economics course within the Faculty of Business and Economics, strategies designed to align assignment tasks with the anticipated professional roles and responsibilities students are likely to encounter in their future careers

4. Conclusions

The seminar in Toruń marked a noteworthy milestone in fostering academic collaboration between European and Ukrainian institutions in the field of online foreign language education. It highlighted how multimodal and transmedial approaches enhance opportunities to teach students contextually rich, authentic language while fostering critical thinking, communication skills, creativity, and cultural awareness. The innovative insights shared by the seminar participants contribute to the theoretical and practical understanding of online learning environments as effective mediums for teaching academic content and developing the foreign language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Through different projects led by Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, the seminar has facilitated the exchange of best practices with Ukrainian universities and successfully established educationalists' connections. They have the potential to open new avenues for *further research* in the field of online foreign language education. Hopefully, this academic project will serve a successful trans-European model for shaping a holistic and inclusive future for European students and learners grounded in socially responsible university cooperation.

Acknowledgments

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Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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МУЛЬТИМОДАЛЬНІ, ТРАНСМЕДІАЛЬНІ І ТРАНС-ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКІ ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ ОНЛАЙН-ВИКЛАДАННЯ І ВИВЧЕННЯ МОВ: 2-Й СЕМІНАР YUFE – УКРАЇНА

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Анотація

Ця оглядова стаття сфокусована на другому семінарі YUFE – Україна 12^{го}–14^{го} листопада 2024 року (альянс YUFE – Молоді Університети Європи за Майбутнє). Другий YUFE – Ukraine семінар був проведений центром іноземних мов університету Миколи Коперніка в Торуні – в одному з найбільших університетів у Польщі і організований за сприяння Польського національного агентства академічних обмінів (NAWA). Ця друга зустріч освітян і викладачів іноземної мови для спеціальних цілей стала транс-європейською подією, яка поєднала професіоналів з Польщі, України, Кіпру, Фінляндії, Грузії, Бельгії. Провідна тема семінару – онлайн викладання і навчання мов визначила його непересічну актуальність.

Хоча мультимодальні та трансмедійні практики навчання стали популярними для ESL та інших освітніх контекстів, виникло кілька додаткових питань. Серед них такі питання, як розвиток мультимодальної грамотності учнів через он-лайн навчання; більш критичне ставлення до оцінювання досягнень студентів, зосередження уваги як на професійних навичках студентів, так і на культурних і соціальних цінностях.

В ході семінару обговорювались сучасні мультимодальні інструменти і трансмедіальні засоби викладання іноземної мови та перекладу, які передбачають використання у навчальному процесі цифрових технологій H5P, ChatGPT, штучного інтелекту, доповненої реальності, а також застосування проєктного підходу та елементів дизайн-мислення. В результаті обговорень і дискусій намічені перспективи спільних міжнародних проєктів та заплановані декілька ініціатив спільного викладання ділової іноземної мови (зокрема, ESP) та іноземної мови для академічних цілей (EAP) із залученням студентів з різних європейських університетів-партнерів.

Ключові слова: *мультимодальний, трансмедіальний, мовна онлайн освіта, професійні навички, II YUFE– Україна семінар.*

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

General information

Cognition, communication, discourse (CCD) is an on-line open-access journal in Arts and Humanities (Linguistics and languages, Literature, Philology – UDC Subjects 80, 81, 82). Both its editorial team and the choice of authors are international.

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Content arrangement of the paper

- Title of the paper in English (12 pts, bold, CAPITAL letters, align center).
- Name and surname of the author(s) (12 pts, align center).
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- Abbreviations if any.
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Text format

All materials should be Times New Roman, 12, font 1; indentation 1,0 cm, margins: left – 2 cm., right – 2 cm., top & bottom – 2.5 cm. The first lines in all sections and after Fig.s and tables are not indented.

Manuscripts may be submitted as email attachments in Microsoft Word 97-2003/2010 (author's name.doc/docx) if they do not contain unusual fonts. If special symbols are used their fonts should be sent separately.

Contributions should be in English, may include multilanguage examples. Spelling should be either British or American English consistently throughout the paper. If not written by a native speaker of English it is advisable to have the paper checked by a native speaker.

Papers should be reasonably divided into numbered sections and, if necessary, sub-sections.

The title and author(s). Please use * for the corresponding author. Example:

TITLE (TIMES NEW ROMAN, 12, BOLD, CAPITAL LETTERS, CENTERED)

First Author Name and Surname* (Times New Roman, 12, Bold)

(Affiliation, City, Country);

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Next Author Name and Surname (Times New Roman, 12, Bold)
(Affiliation, City, Country);
e-mail ORCID

Abstract (one in English and one in Ukrainian)

An abstract is a brief, comprehensive summary of the contents of the article; it allows readers to survey the contents of an article quickly. The abstract should normally be a single paragraph *between 200 and 250 words* (minimum 1800 signs, key words included). A good abstract is accurate, nonevaluative, coherent and readable, clear and concise. It uses verbs rather than their noun equivalents and the active rather than the passive voice; uses the present tense to describe conclusions drawn or results with continuing applicability; uses the past tense to describe specific variables manipulated or outcomes measured. An abstract for *a theory-oriented paper* should describe: how the theory or model works and/or the principles on which it is based; what phenomena the theory or model accounts for; and its linkages to empirical results. An abstract for a *methodological paper* should comprise the general class of methods being discussed; the essential features of the proposed method; and the range of application of the proposed method. Given the small amount of words allowed, each word and sentence included in your abstract needs to be meaningful. In addition, all the information contained in the abstract must be discussed in the main body of the paper.

Keywords: *List five to ten pertinent keywords specific to the article with a full stop; use singular nouns (italics).*

1. Introduction

The body of a manuscript opens with an introduction that presents the specific problem under study and describes the research strategy. The structure of the introduction should necessarily comprise the author's *aims / tasks / objectives (bold, italics), the subject-matter* and the *material* of the study.

Exploring the importance of the problem the article should state how it is related to previous work in the area. If other aspects of this study have been reported previously, how does this report differ from, and build on, the earlier report?

Describe relevant literature. This section should review studies to establish the general area, and then move towards studies that more specifically define or are more specifically related to the research you are conducting. Your literature review must not be a series of quotations strung together; instead it needs to provide a critical analysis of previous work.

State hypotheses and objectives, their correspondence to research. The statement of the hypothesis should logically follow on from your literature review and you may want to make an explicit link between the variables you are manipulating or measuring in your study and previous research. The present tense is used to state your hypotheses and objectives.

Sections and subsections of the paper. Divide your article into clearly defined sections. Any labeled sections / subsection should be numbered (i.e., 2. or 2.1, 2.2 if necessary) and given a brief heading marked in bold (Times New Roman, 12 without full stops at the end). Each heading should appear on its own separate line.

A good paragraph should contain at least the following four elements: transition, topic sentence, specific evidence and analysis, and a brief concluding sentence. A transition sentence acts as a transition from one idea to the next. A topic sentence tells the reader what you will be discussing in the paragraph. Specific evidence and analysis support your claims that provide a deeper level of detail than your topic sentence. A concluding sentence tells the reader how and why this information supports the paper's thesis.

2. Method

The Method section describes in detail how the study was conducted, including conceptual and operational definitions of the variables used in the study. It also permits experienced investigators to replicate the study.

The method section should be written in paragraph form with as little repetition as possible. This section will often be broken down into subsections such as participants, materials and procedure. The subsections you use will depend on what is useful to help describe and explain your experiment.

In the method section of the paper you should use the past tense since you are describing what you did; for example, e.g. *An experiment was performed...*, *The participants were instructed to ...* .

3. Findings / Results

This section describes but does not explain your results; it provides the reader with a factual account of your findings. You can, however, draw attention to specific trends or data that you think are important. Your aim in your Results section is to make your results as comprehensible as possible for your readers.

If you are presenting statistical results, place descriptive statistics first (means and standard deviations) followed by the results of any inferential statistical tests you performed. Indicate any transformations to the data you are reporting; for example, you may report percentage correct scores rather than straight scores. Raw data and lengthy whole transcripts of qualitative data should be put in the appendices, only excerpts (descriptive statistics or illustrative highlights of lengthy qualitative data) should be included in the results section.

Authors should refer in the text to all tables and figures used and explain what the readers should look for when using the table or figure. Focus only on the important point the readers should draw from them, and leave the details for the readers to examine on their own. Each table and figure must be intelligible without reference to the text, so be sure to include an explanation of every abbreviation (except the standard statistical symbols and abbreviations).

Give titles to all tables and figures, number all tables sequentially as you refer to them in the text (Table 1, Table 2, etc.), likewise for figures (Fig. 1, Fig. 2, etc.).

4. Discussion

If necessary an article may have more sections and subsections.

All examples are italicized. One word or word-combination examples are given within the body of a paragraph.

Sentence or textual examples, preferably numbered through the article, are given in separate paragraphs in italics (their source is given straight) with indentation 1,0 cm for the whole paragraph and separated from the previous / following text by one blank line. Example:

- (1) *"I'm Prendergast," said the newcomer. "Have some port?"*
"Thank you, I'd love to." (Waugh, 1980, p. 46)

5. Conclusions

This section simply states what the researcher thinks the data mean, and, as such, should relate directly back to the problem/question stated in the introduction. By looking at only the Introduction and Conclusions sections, a reader should have a good idea of what the researcher has investigated and discovered even though the specific details of how the work was done would not be known. After moving from general to specific information in the introduction and body paragraphs, your conclusion should restate the main points of your argument.

Conclusions should finish up with an overview of future possible research.

Acknowledgments (not obligatory and not numbered paragraph). Identify grants or other financial support (and the source, if appropriate) for your study. Next, acknowledge colleagues who assisted in conducting the study or critiquing the manuscript. End this paragraph with thanks for personal assistance, such as in manuscript preparation.

Footnotes should be avoided. Any essential **notes** should be numbered consecutively in the text (super scripts) and grouped together at the end of the paper.

In-text citations. The journal uses APA-6 format ([APA style](#)). If you are directly quoting from a work and the author is not named in a signal phrase, you will need to include the author, year of publication, and the page number for the reference: (Pocheptsov, 1976, p. 15; Leech, 1985, pp. 373-4).

If the quotation includes the author's last name, it is simply followed by the date of publication in parentheses; if no last name is mentioned in the text it is given in parentheses. For example: According to Jones (2005), "Students often had difficulty using Gerunds and Infinitives, especially when it was their first time" (p. 156). Or "Students often had difficulty..." (Jones, 2005, p. 156).

If you cite a work of two to five authors (use '&' within parentheses; use 'and' outside parentheses):

a) Becker and Seligman's (1996) findings contradicted this result. This result was later contradicted (Becker & Seligman, 1996). Mind no comma before & in citing two authors!

(b) Medvec, Madey, and Gilovich (1995) examined a group of Olympic medalists. Or medalists were examined in (Medvec, Madey, & Gilovich, 1995) (Mind a comma before & in citing three to five authors in parenthesis!) A subsequent citation would appear as (Medvec et al., 1995).

In case of six or more authors, cite only the last name of the first author, followed by "et al." and the year of publication: Barakat et al. (1995) attempted to ...

APA-6

In-Text and Parenthetical Citation Examples

Quote with author's name in text	Smith (2019) states that, "... " (p. 112).
Quote with author's name in reference	This is quoted as, "... " (Smith, 2019, pp. 112-4).
Paraphrasing with author's name in text	Smith (2019) stated these facts, too.
Paraphrasing author's name in reference	This fact has been stated (Smith, 2019).
No author – give title of work abbreviated to first major word	This book is true (Long, 2019).
<i>Italics for books & journals</i> , "quotation marks" for articles & web pages	This article is true ("Long," 2019).
Citing entire website – put URL	This has evidence (www.pubmed.gov).
Quote from website – use paragraph number	According to, "... " (Smith, 2019, para. 4).
More than one author with same last name	P. L. Smith (2018) and J. M. Smith (2019)
Source has more than one author in text	Smith and Lee agree that (2019)
Source has more than one author in reference	This is agreed upon (Smith & Long, 2019).
Citing more than one work	We all agree (Smith, 2019; Lee, 2018).
Citing more than one work by same author published in the same year	We all agree (Smith, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c)
	Smith (2019a) believes
	It has been reported ... (Smith, 2019c)

The quotations longer than three lines should constitute a separate block, indented 1.0 cm paragraph(s), single spaced, font 12 pts, italics, with no quotation marks, e.g., Kövecses (2018, p. 133) writes:

In sum, the intratextual use of conceptual metaphor does not necessarily produce metaphorically homogenous discourse. In most cases, a variety of different conceptual metaphors is used in particular media and other texts.....

For such quotations their author may be cited in a parenthesis below, not italicized, e.g.:

In sum, the intratextual use of conceptual metaphor does not necessarily produce metaphorically homogenous discourse. In most cases, a variety of different conceptual metaphors is used in particular media and other texts. This is a natural phenomenon, given the nature of conceptual metaphors as based on the general structure of concepts (i.e., that the concepts have various aspects and we use the conceptual metaphors to comprehend those aspects). (Kövecses, 2018, p. 133).

Quotation marks. Single quotation marks should be used for the translation of non-English words, e.g., *cogito* ‘I think’.

Double quotation marks should be used in all other cases, i.e., direct quotations in running text.

Please always use rounded quotation marks (“. . .”) not "straight" ones.

Dashes. Spaced EM dashes (long English dashes) are used as parenthetical dashes (“text — text”). Please do not use double hyphens (--).

Unspaced EN dashes (a short dash corresponding to the Ukrainian dash) should be used between inclusive numbers to show a range), e.g., 153-159, 1975-1979.

A long dash (EM dash, —) without spaces on the left or right in English texts might set off a phrase at the end of a sentence—like this one. Or, EM dashes may set off a phrase midsentence—a technique that really draws a reader’s attention—as they do in this sentence.

Italics should be used for:

- Words, phrases, and sentences treated as linguistic examples
- Foreign-language expressions
- Titles of books, published documents, newspapers, and journals
- Drawing attention to key terms in a discussion at first mention only. Thereafter, these terms should be set straight.
- Emphasizing a word or phrase in a quotation indicating [*emphasis mine* – N.N.]

Bold or **underlining** may be used sparingly to draw attention to a particular linguistic feature within numbered examples (not in the running text).

Please keep the use of italics and boldface type to an absolute minimum. CAPITAL LETTERS and SMALL CAPS should not be used for emphasis.

Punctuation. Please use a serial comma (an Oxford comma or a Harvard comma) placed immediately before the coordinating conjunction (and or or) in a series of three or more terms as in “France, Italy, and Spain” (with the serial comma), but “France or Spain” (two terms only).

Put a comma before ‘which’ to introduce attributive clauses (“Tom’s book, which he spent ten years writing, is now a best seller.”). Do not use a comma to introduce questions and prepositional phrases (“in which”).

Abbreviations. List of Common Latin Abbreviations for APA Style

Abbreviation	Meaning	Used inside of parentheses only
cf.	“compare” or “consult” (to contrast information)	Never put a comma after “...in (cf. Zeller & Williams, 2007)”.
e.g.,	“for example,” (<i>exempli gratia</i>)	Always put a comma after: “Some studies (e.g., Macmillan, 2009)...”
etc.	“and so on” / “and so forth”	Put a comma before if used to end a list of at least two other items: “(chemistry, math, etc.). In other cases do not use a comma “(biology etc.)”.
i.e.,	“that is,” (<i>id est</i> ; specific clarification)	Always put a comma after: “(i.e., first, second, or third)”
vs.	“versus”	Put a full stop after: “(low vs. high)”, do not italicize.
ibid.	“ <i>ibidem</i> ” for citations	Not used in APA to refer again to the last source previously referenced. Instead give each citation using author names as usual.

References (Times New Roman 12, bold, caps, not numbered)

A reference list (usually about 30 authors, preferably of the last decade) must comprise all the references cited in the text of your paper, listed in alphabetical order at the end of the paper and not numbered. Each reference in the reference list needs to contain all of the bibliographic information from its source (referencing style APA-6). In each new item, its first line is aligned right, other lines (if any) are indented 1,0 cm. Please make your URL and DOI active.

For materials in Latin:

Books (authored work) & e-books:

Langacker, R.W. (2008). *Cognitive grammar: A basic introduction*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Chandler, D. (1998). Semiotics for beginners. Retrieved September, 1, 2018, from <http://www.users.aber.ac.uk/dgc/Documents/S4B>.

Book chapter:

Mind that editors' first names are cited before their family names, without a comma before "&" for two editors. In case of three or more editors, there is a comma before "&".

Haybron, D. M. (2008). Philosophy and the science of subjective well-being. In M. Eid & R. J. Larsen (Eds.), *The science of subjective well-being* (pp. 17–43). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

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