

Psycholinguistic Analysis of Information Support of Ukrainian Crisis in German Mass Media

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The current article is devoted to the linguistic analysis of the information materials of the popular German mass media covering the Ukrainian crisis in 2014. Special attention is paid to the formation of the Russian and Ukrainian images in the framework of the information-psychological confrontation through psycholinguistic processing of the text, usage of special approaches to information definition and representation. As a result of the analysis, the authors have come to conclusion that a lot of articles contain not only informational, but also propagandistic implied sense, main aim of which is to suggest readers such point of view, which corresponds to the current political line of the European Union (EU) and Germany in relation to the Ukrainian crisis and its main actors.

Keywords: Ukrainian crisis, Russia, Ukraine, Germany, conflicts information support, psycholinguistics

Ukrainian crisis, which began with mass riots on Maidan in 2013, had a significant effect on the current international relations system. There are two basic camps of information and economic combating powers involved in this conflict. The first one is headed by Russia, which is in favor of federalization on the south-eastern Ukraine (called in the Russian and pro-Russian mass media, New-Russia) and a number of countries that back such position explicitly or implicitly by information and economic means. The other camp is the coalition of the Western states, mainly USA and Germany, as well as most of the European states and some other countries supporting the Kiev government.

It is very interesting for scientists to research the information support of this conflict and the ways how the information was presented to the population of the countries involved in the conflict and its consequences, in the first turn for Germany.

The aim for the authors was to analyze the specific of the information support of the events in Ukraine and around it in Germany as the leading EU member-state from the lexical and psycholinguistic point of view. In the framework of preparation for this research more than 50 information issues and articles of different German mass media were analyzed as well as the most characteristic ones were chosen by the authors for more detailed analysis and illustration in the research.

Scientific Elaboration of the Issue

As it was mentioned by most of the researches, such notion as linguistic and extra-linguistic reality is a very complex phenomenon implementing a variety of functions: it can be a tool

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for communication, a mean for exchanging and transferring of information, illustration of psychological life of an individual, product of a determine historical epoch, form of cultural existence, illustration of socio-cultural traditions, etc. These all determines the variety of approaches and the multiplicity of definitions (Denisenko, Chebotareva, 2008).

In this regards, if we look at the linguistic elements of a text, it can be defined as «phenomenologically determined initial language form of language existence» (Schmidt, 1978). Coherent text is understood as some logical sequence of sentences, interconnected with each other in the framework of the sense given by an author» (Nikolaeva, 1978). It is specially organized closed chain of sentences viewed as a coherent statement (Moskalskaya, 1981). Text is also a global unity or macrostructure. (Prohorov, 2006). It is also determined as hierarchy of communication programs subject to activity in which it is integrated (Halperin I.R., Shakhnarovich A.M., Zimnayaya I.A., Sorokin Y.A. and others).

The language of mass media as one of the functional parlances has attracted attention of specialists, both Russian and foreign ones. In the Russian linguistics such names as V.G. Kostomarov, G.Y. Solganik, V.S. Vinogradov, A.N. Vasilieva, A.N. Kozhin, O.A. Krylova, Kurchatkina N.N., Odincov V.V., Stepanov U.S., Firsova N.M., Shisjkova T.N., Popok H.-K.L., Sinayavskiy A.V. can be mentioned (Saiko, 2012).

Communicative problems of modern culture is widely represented and analyzed by thinkers of diverse philosophical branches: D. Bell, Jean Baudrillard, J. Derrida, P. Bourdieu, M. Castells, J.-F. Lyotard, M. McLuhan, E. Toffler and many others. The analysis of the formation processes of communicative ontology of the modern culture is also relevant for the current research; it was presented in the theory of communicative action by Y. Habermas, systemic-functional approach by N. Luhmann, constructivist understanding of the nature of social and cultural reality by P. Berger and T. Luckman, critic of mass media in a society of mass by M. Hork- Hymer and T. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, H. Ortega-y-Gasset.

Numerous works contain analysis of the media as a cultural phenomenon. They study the role and influence of the media in modern society from the philosophical, sociological, cultural, and linguistic points of view. These are studies of N.B. Kirillov, Y.Y. Lashchenko, M.M. Nazarov, A. Podoroga, G.G. Pocheptsov, O.V. Orlova, Z.I. Ryazanov, L.I. Ermolenkinoy and E.A. Kostyashina. Such researchers as S.G. Kara-Murza, O. Karpuhin and E. Makarevich, D.S. Naidina, A.S. Nikiforova and L.A. Kuryleva, V.V. Orlova touch upon various practical aspects of the problem areas and functioning of the mass media. Philosophical understanding of the media reality, as well as problems of its influence on the individual is carried out in the works V.V. Savchuk, M.A. Stepanov, D.A. Kolesnikova, I.V. Chelysheva, E.I. Kuznetsova, T.B. Kudryashova, E.G. Varicheva, L.V. Nurgaleeva, and others.

Constructivist studies of the German theorists and practitioners are extremely important from the point of view of the current work and problematic. It is necessary to mention such names as K. Beck, H. Bonfadelli, H.-B. Brosius, W. Donsbach, H.M. Kepplinger, M. Kunczik, A. Zipfel, G. Siegert, M. Schenk, W. Schulz, W. Staab and others.

We also would like to outline the studies analyzing Russian media coverage in Germany. In Russian tradition the image of Russia in the foreign media is presented foremost in philological perspective. We can enumerate the material relating to Russia of American and British (N.A. Krasilnikova, S.V. Kobzeva), Italy (F. Manfredi), Polish (K. Sobiyanek) and German mass media (V. Golyshev, M. Jackowska, A.A. Schipitsyna, O.S. Sharmanova). Several authors (G. Weinstein, D. Gavra and Savitskaya, O.V. Maleeva, A. Rosomahin and D. Khrustalev, A.V. Fedorov) examined the image of Russia in the context of the current socio-political situation (Petukhov & Chuprakova, 2014; Markova and et.al., 2014, Petukhov & Krasnitskiy 2014a, Petukhov & Krasnitskiy 2014b).

The general issues of perception of Russia in Germany in the German-language literature are considered by A. Kamp and P. Jahn, L. Kopelew, K. Schlogel, H. H. Schroeder. Research of media discourse is presented in a rather extensive way and covers the time period from the end of the World War II to the present day, reflecting the coverage of Russia on German television by V. Degtjarova, K. Marx and in the German-language press by A. Ahrens, S. Gavrilova, E. Essen, K. Seifert, W. Crudopf, D. Porzgen and others.

The research methodology is a conceptual synthesis of several related sciences and theory, practice and experiment, when the theoretical principles were not only derived from the experimental practical material, but also verified in the subsequent practical application. From the perspective of the present study, we choose the following methods:

The method of content analysis (sociological and statistical analysis method, based on counting the number of units specified in a particular group of texts);

The method of discourse analysis, aimed at studying ways of production, distribution and perception of media texts;

A group of linguistic methods—sociolinguistics, functional linguistics, rhetorical criticism and pragmatism; and

A whole range of methods of historical-cultural and culture-comparative nature.

Information Representation of Conflict in German Mass Media

For the current analysis the authors used a number of publications of the popular German internet-portal called *www.zeit.de*, as well as printed periodic issue *Frankfurter Rundschau*, the so-called independent newspaper (*unabhängige Tageszeitung*), daily German issue *Jewish Voice* from Germany, German information daily newspaper *Welt*, which is rather popular among business elite, as well as one of the leading newspapers in Germany *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, which pretends itself to be newspaper for Germany (*Zeitung für Deutschland*), large German weekly newspaper *Welt am Sonntag* and the largest German daily illustrated tabloid newspaper *Bild*, which is read (not taking into account its electronic version) by more than 12 million people daily.

While the analysis of the selected material the following means of expressiveness, methods and approaches towards presentation of information. As an example, rude, sarcastic and scornful jokes (irony and sarcasm as a mean of expressiveness): *die Sauberung des Regierungsapparates* (Cleaning of the state apparatus)/... *Nicht durch die Mülletonne, sondern durch Entlassung* (not only through the trash, but firing)/*Dort sitzt noch immer die alte Garde an den Hebeln* (There's still sitting old guard and presses on the main levers) / *Trage Staatsapparat* (Slack bureaucracy)/*Schon seit monaten tobt im kreml ein Machtkampf wie zu Sowjetzeiten* (for the past few months in the Kremlin, as in Soviet times, raging power struggle)/*Großer Mann, was nun?* (Big man, what's next?).

During the work with the German-language press were able to establish that any factual information was measured out in doses. Quotes of Putin and other Russian politicians are extremely widespread in the German press, but are carefully selected and taken out of context that indicates the intention of the press to transmit information in a contrived and wrong way. No wonder that the following quote is intended to evoke the feeling of pity and condescension to the Ukraine as a weak country that is demeaned by the powerful neighbour: *Kritiker wenden ein, Bestechlichkeit sei nicht in erster Linie eine Frage des Personals, sondern des Systems: Viele Beamte hatten ein derart niedriges Gehalt, dass ohne Bestechungsgeld kein Auskommen zu finden sei.* (Critics argue that corruptibility is foremost

not the question of a specifically single person, but the system: many officials salary is so low that without bribes they cannot earn any income). It is common to come across statements and threats towards Russia related to the accession of the Crimea: *Russlands Präsident sollte überzeugt werden, dass er mit dem Gewinn der Krim die Ukraine verloren hat* (President of Russia must be convinced that together with the victory over the Crimea he will lose Ukraine).

One of the brightest and most common methods is the use of the brute and rude vocabulary in press (*Weg mit der Bande! Skandierete damals die Menge am Maidan/Down with the gang*—screamed the crowd on the Square) or vocabulary, exaggerating the mood about the discussed subject and causes unfavorable emotions and negative «after taste» after reading (there are used different epithets and symbolically you can call it hyperbole): *die scharfe Kritik* (sharp criticism), *Verschärfung von Konflikten* (escalation of the conflict), *in düsteren Farben* (in dark colors, blacken, to exaggerate), *Eskalation*, *Chaos*, *Massenvernichtungswaffen* (WMD), *Teilingslinie*, *Geschosse* (shots).

The formation of a negative image of the country is also due to the negative statements with a negative connotation: *Korruption und Misswirtschaft haben das Land an den Rand des wirtschaftlichen Kollapses gebracht: Im Ranking von Transparency International rangiert die Ukraine auf Platz 144 von 177 Ländern.* (Corruption and fraud have led the country on the verge of economic collapse. Ukraine is ranked 144 out of 177 countries in the Transparency International (apparently on the economic situation –*author's note*). It should be emphasized that the mass media publishes only those of Putin's remarks about USA that contain negative inflection and ignores other statements and comments, and as a consequence creates negative readers' attitude towards the President of the Russian Federation, which contributes to the formation of the image of allegedly embittered and very narrow-minded dictator: *Der russische Präsident Wladimir Putin hat den USA im Ukraine-Konflikt Erpressung und Feindseligkeit vorgeworfen* (Russian President Vladimir Putin chided the United States for extortion and hostilities in the Ukrainian conflict); *Putin ... hatte dem Westen vorgeworfen, sein Land zerschlagen zu wollen, weil es zu stark geworden sein* (... Putin blamed Western countries for their intention to destroy his country, because it has become too strong).

However, speaking about broader and global issues, Putin statements cited in the press, according to a number of periodicals are valid: *Russland habe Interesse an Stabilität in seinem Nachbarland* (Russia is interested in stable relations with its neighbor), *Russland verlangt für sich keinen besonderen, außergewöhnlichen Platz in der Welt (...). Wir wollen nur, dass unsere Interessen berücksichtigt werden, betonte er.* (Russia does not need to undertake any special privileged position in the world. We just want our interests to be taken into account ...). Moreover, Europe recognizes that the Putin power lies in the weakness and indecision of Europe (*Putins ... Stärke liegt in Europas Schwäche und Unentschlossenheit*).

Considering the issue of vocabulary, in particular brutal and extremely informal one, it should be emphasized that it is often accompanied by all sorts of comparisons, including sublime and poetic ones: *Die USA hätten als selbst ernannte Sieger des Kalten Krieges einen Führungsanspruch in der Welt. Putin verglich das Land mit einem «Raffke», der sich immer mehr einverleiben wolle.* (United States declared themselves winners of the Cold War, and claim to leadership in the world. Putin compared the country with the «upstart» who wants (*is trying*) to take (*grab, soak*) more and more; *Das Grollen über ihren Köpfen ist so gewöhnlich geworden wie das Aufstehen am Morgen, so lastig wie das Husten in der klammen Kälte am Abend* (roar over their heads became so familiar, like getting up in the morning, so intrusive as coughing in the damp cold evening; *Frieden, aber es ist wie Krieg* (Peace like war).

The most common topic in the German press is the political situation in Ukraine, whose image is often depicted through metaphors: *In der Republik der Lügen* (The country of lies). Frequent examples of the use of the trope as a gradation in conjunction with oxymoron that most clearly emphasizes the contrast and controversial topics in Ukraine: *Krieg, wo Waffenruhe herrscht, Menschen, die in Bunkern leben, und Tote, die zu Helden werden: Wie im Osten der Ukraine ein Staat entsteht* (war, dominated by a truce, people who live in bunkers and the dead who become heroes: so a new state is born in the East of Ukraine).

Through such technique as antithesis (contra-position), Putin and Obama are represented as two opposing camps, two major players in the modern political system in which the steering wheel and the palm of supremacy belongs to both of them by turns: *Lieber Putin als Obama* (Better Putin than Obama). The transmitted information in the press is often falsified by journalists: *Offiziell war die russische Armee an diesem Krieg nie beteiligt, und doch wurden immer wieder ihre Soldaten auf ukrainischem Boden festgenommen*. (Officially, the Russian army did not take part in this war, and yet their soldiers have been re-arrested on the territory of Ukraine).

Closing maneuver that we should pay attention to is a rhetorical question (statement in the form of a question), occurring in all parts of many articles: *Wer trägt die Verantwortung und wer die Schuld an ihrer Situation? Wer wird sie entschädigen und wer für sie sorgen? Entsteht ein Staat oder nur die Illusion davon?* (Who is responsible for this situation and who is to be blamed? Who will compensate the losses and who cares? There is a State or an illusion?) Such a method, or rather the question is addressed to the reader, on the one hand encourages him to come to their own conclusion, but on the other hand the answer is already incorporated in the formulation, the content of the article and even ingrained to an inexperienced reader by the mass media.

Accordingly, analyzing a series of German-language articles dealing with political events in Ukraine in general and Russia in particular, it can be concluded that due to the use of a number of linguistic means of expression with a strong negative connotation negative image of Russia as the aggressor against a small and miserable in the Ukraine is created on pages of many German publications. Formation of the faulty opinion about the country, described by journalists, as well as subjective presentation of speech and manners of modern leadership of the Russian Federation is the result of the information war and political struggle against Russia.

Conclusion

In the light of the recent events connected with Ukraine, Russia is presented as a potential enemy of the EU and dangerous neighbor, the instigator of military actions restraining the rights of independent Ukraine, violating various international laws and waging wars. This is evidenced by quotations confirming that any information related to Russia and Ukraine is served in the proper doses as well as viewed from the point of view and context that is necessary for the authors. In particular, frequent statements are designed to cause on the one hand the reader's pity and condescension to the Ukraine as a weak country and on the other hand the perception of Russia as a tyrant. At the same time the reports of OSCE and the Red Cross about the human rights violations on the territory of Donetsk and Lugansk regions by the Kiev authorities are ignored completely or almost completely, as the statements about the use of offensive weapons against the civilian population and facilitating humanitarian catastrophe. Not to mention the ignored signals from Russia of such action and censuring of the so-called «Putin's propaganda machine» (Putins Propaganda maschinerie), without any initiative of appropriate investigation (for example,

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massive loss of life in Odessa, 2nd May as a result of the burning of the Palace of Trade Unions by the right-wing radicals).

Often, when the German-speaking media mentions Russia and reproduces the speech of Russian politicians and leaders of the state, from the variety of vocabulary to choose the most rude and rough expression are mentioned to exaggerate the mood over the subject matter and cause negative feelings towards Russia and bad «aftertaste» after reading the article. Due to such pronounced negative coloration statements impregnated with sarcasm and irony of Putin about USA, representatives of the media are antagonizing the readers against the Russian president and by doing so they are forming the image of allegedly extremely embittered and narrow minded Russian dictator in the minds of the readers, who practically are not familiar with how the things really are.

However, for some wider and global issues, the cited Putin's quotes and statements are characterized by greater fairness and are being reasonable and prudent. Thus from the last statement it is evident that we can witness a double standard policy, leading to the formation of the dubious image of Russia in the eyes of the world.

Funding: This study was funded by the grant of the Russian Science Foundation (project No 15-18-00047)

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