

## **Linguistic Features of Mass Media Discourse in German and Russian**

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### **Abstract**

The article is devoted to the comparative analysis of newspaper articles in search of linguistic and extralinguistic features of the functioning of mass media discourse in Germany and Russia. In the modern world, the mass media are becoming more and more important due to the limitation of contacts and the transition to distance work and learning. The object of media linguistics is all types of texts that exist in the mass media space: in newspapers, on television, radio or on the Internet. We define the concept of mass media discourse as a cognitive-pragmatic environment that realizes its potential through the production and translation of evaluative meanings and metaphorical interpretation of fragments of social life to a wide audience. The main goal of mass media discourse is the function of influencing the recipient by presenting semantic and evaluative information, implemented using various communication means and channels. During the study, the most commonly used communicative means of mass media discourse were investigated and it was found that the use of borrowings, xenisms and paremias not only serve as a means of linguistic economy, but also can act as conceptual binders structuring the available information and integrating a new meaning, revealing relevant knowledge important for modern man.

**Keywords:** Mass Media, Discourse, German, Russian, Englishism, Xenism, Paremia.

### **1. Introduction**

Emotional intensity, which is achieved in writing with a palette of evaluative,

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expressive and figurative linguistic means, becomes a new original characteristic of media discourse, making it less officious and closer to a live human conversation.

## **2. Methods**

Methods that we apply throughout our studies are the following: descriptive method, method of linguistic and linguoculturological analysis of linguistic material, method of continuous sampling from newspaper articles, methods of elementary statistics, and analysis of definitions.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

Borrowing is one of the means of influencing the mass audience within the framework of mass media discourse. In both German and Russian, there is a tendency to replace the existing concept with a foreign language equivalent. As a rule, Englishism, or Anglicism, becomes this equivalent due to internationalization, or the author's desire to create a certain stylistic effect.

There is a strong influence of the English language, especially in the field of economics, information and communication services:

„Und wie wäre es, mit nur einem Blick zu bezahlen? Klingt nach Sci-ence-Fiction, ist aber schon in einigen Moskauer Cafés möglich. Um die Funktion zu aktivieren, muss man erstmal die Sber-App öffnen und der Verarbeitung biometrischer personenbezogener Daten zustimmen“ (Moskauer Deutsche Zeitung, 2021). Used as a comparison, anglicism Science-Fiction attracts the reader's attention, focusing his attention on the unusual nature of the new application that allows you to make payments using retinal scanning. Anglicisms in such articles are associated in the reader's mind with something new, modern and progressive. In advertising texts, anglicisms often serve as a means of increasing sales, creating a correlation of the advertised product with the free American lifestyle.

Stylistic motives for the use of anglicisms in mass media discourse are of particular interest - mass media strive for an accurate, concise, understandable, and at the same time original presentation of facts. The author aspires to create his own recognizable style of presentation while relying on the general style of a particular publication and of the universal categories of the conceptual picture of the world (Gabdrakhmanova et al., 2020). Thus, anglicisms are often used in mass media discourse as a euphemism, often due to their neutral or positive connotation and stylistic coloring in comparison with a synonym in the target language:

„Führende Intensivmediziner fordern einen neuen Lockdown“ or „Lockdown, Shutdown, ohne Alternative, Künstler und Kneipen bleiben ohne Perspektive“ “ (Frankfurter Allgemeine 2021). The use of the anglicisms Lockdown and Shutdown makes it possible to somewhat neutralize the negative attitude of the population towards the imposed restrictions and helps to express a person's viewpoint (Nazarova et al., 2018; Kai, 2021; Kai & Liao, 2021).

In addition, anglicisms in mass media discourse demonstrate the following feature - a tendency to indistinct syntactic construction or expansion of lexical content:

„Apple-Besitzer haben als Nutzer des Betriebssystems OS X bereits einen Passwortmanager an Bord“ (Werra Rundschau: 2021). Nutzer has a meaning fixed in the dictionary "a legal entity that has the authority to use something" (<https://www.duden.de>) however, in the discourse under study, this lexeme acquires a different meaning – someone who uses a computer, or in this case, an operating system. In this instance, there is an expansion of the lexical meaning of the word under the influence of the English user. However, if we compare the meanings of the user lexeme in English and German, then in German the lexical meaning is narrowed to " a user of a computer, operating system, or application", while in English this lexeme has other meanings – consumer, subscriber, legal entity having the right to use someone else's property, etc.

In the Russian language, there is a similar tendency to change the lexical meaning under the influence of the English language:

«But judging by the catalogs of the upcoming Christie's Live auctions, the current venture has every chance of success – the site has very convenient navigation, it is equipped with clear hints, so it will not be difficult to understand what is happening» (<https://www.vedomosti.ru>). Wikipedia gives the following interpretation of the meaning of navigation: determining the location, speed and orientation of moving objects; the period of the year when shipping is possible according to local climatic conditions. There was an expansion of lexical meaning under the influence of English. Now, in a general sense, navigation is the process of managing some object on the Internet (Yarullina et al., 2019).

In addition to borrowings, mass media discourse is characterized by the presence of paremias both in the headlines and in the texts of articles. Their intentional use is explained by the need to create an expressive effect in order to interest the reader. Besides, paremias adapt to the topic and genre of messages, which determines the differences in the lexical component of the original and discursive use.

«They looked a gift horse in the mouth» (<https://www.kommersant.ru>) (Original: Never look a gift horse in the mouth);

«Wer sein Geld anlegen möchte, sollte sich auf jeden Fall darüber im Klaren sein, dass nicht alles auf eine Karte gesetzt werden sollte» (Original: Man soll nicht Alles auf Eine Karte setzen.

«Nur nicht den Teufel an die Wand malen» [Finanzblatt 2018] (Original: Man soll den Teufel nicht an die Wand malen (Denisova & Lipatova, 2020);

«Österreichs Bundeskanzler spricht Klartext: Wir kaufen keine Katze im Sack!» (Original: Man muß keine Katz im Sacke kaufen and etc;

The following example uses the tactic of indirectly disclosing the content of the paremia. To support his own opinion, the author of the article uses the expression "And coming to a foreign monastery with your own rules is fraught with conflicts", the source of which is the paremia "Don't go into somebody else's monastery with your own set of rules = when in Rome, do as the Romans do" (Gilmudinova et al., 2020). In this case, the author's modification of the paremiological dictum is observed, where the didactic orientation is completely excluded. However, due to the fact that part of the lexical content has been preserved, the folklore origin of the utterance is easily recognizable.

«Robert Heinze senkte seine Stimme: Besser keine schlafenden Hunde wecken, empfahl der FDP-Ratscherr, sonst gehe der Ärger mit der Scharoun-Schule erst richtig los. Wenn keiner etwas sage, könne dort zumindest eine Konzertsaison stattfinden. Beschließen wollte der Planungsausschuss am Ende nichts...Heinzes Appell ("schlafende Hunde") wollte CDU-Ratscherr Andreas Kolk nicht folgen: "Ich fühle mich verpflichtet, das anzusprechen, und will im Vorfeld klare Verhältnisse schaffen.» (Danilevskaya et al., 2021). Within the framework of this example, a situation is modeled in which a member of the Free Democratic Party, Robert Heinz, via a paremiological statement „Besser keine schlafenden Hunde wecken” advises not to aggravate the situation. However, the original paremiological expression looks differently – «Schlafende Hunde soll man nicht wecken» (Guryanov Igor et al., 2017). By means of the author's variability, the intention of the prohibitive statement is reduced to the advice “not to aggravate the situation.” Here too, the author reinforces his statement with the argumentative part “otherwise, troubles will start”. Within the framework of the cognitive-discursive approach to the study of illustrative material, a number of the following pragmatic functions were continued – expressive, directive, constative, compressive, and accentuation functions.

Expressive function. In mass media discourse, there is often a change in the lexical meaning of borrowings or stable phrases. The authors of articles often modify phraseological units, thereby changing their meaning in order to create an expressive effect:

- Man proposes, God disposes. → «Politician proposes, jail disposes. Every 50th candidate running for the elections on September 9 has a criminal past» (Novaya gayeta 2018);
- When in Rome, do as the Romans do (Novaya gayeta 2018) → «When in Rome, do not do as Greeks do» (Novaya gayeta 2018).
- Hollywood majors step up the fight against pirates for Russian consumers (Vedomosti: 2021) → widening of the lexical meaning of Russian word “pirate”;
  - Das ist wichtig, denn heute wollen viele Menschen ein Produkt, das möglichst wenige andere Menschen auch haben (Frankfurter Allgemeine 2021) → widening of the lexical meaning of the concept of a product in German by transferring the lexical meanings of the English word “product”.

The function of a negative directive is fulfilled in the intention of calling not to perform any action:

Don't add fuel to the fire in relations between Baku and Yerevan» (Gilmudinova et al., 2016) – a quote of a member of the State Duma on Armenian-Azerbaijani relations. The addressee opposes that third parties interfere in the affairs of the two states, thereby urging not to complicate the current situation. Directional orientation is demonstrated through a negative imperative in the paremia «don't add fuel to the fire » (Gilmudinova et al., 2016).

«Never halloo till you are out of the woods», — Meshcheryakov said in an interview with the correspondent of newspaper “Championat,” Arina Lavrova,” (Vedomosti: 2021) to the words of another athlete who commented on the results of the draw before the start of the international football tournament. In this example, negative directives are also implemented by a prohibitive construction with a negative imperative in the paremia «Never halloo till you are out of the woods» (Anikin 1957: 213). «Macht nicht die Faust im Sack, wenn ihr mit politischen Entscheiden und herrschenden Umständen nicht einverstanden sind, sondern nehmt aktiv am politischen Geschehen teil und nutzt euer Stimm- und Wahlrecht», ermunterte Mario Moser die Jugendlichen» (Tagblatt 2012). A member of the city's political community encourages young people under the age of 35 to participate actively in political life. In this case, the function of a negative directive in the statement is implemented by using campaigning tactics. The addressee is not limited to a paremiological statement «Man soll keine Faust im Sack machen» (Zamaletdinov et al., 2020). In order to correct the behavior of the recipients, the speaker offers a stereotyped version of action "not to put up with the situation, if the recipients are not satisfied, but to participate actively in political events."

«Der Absender, der auch auf seine Unterbringung in der Psychiatrie eingeht und sich vermummt auf seinem Profil in dem sozialen Netzwerk darstellt, kritisiert die Berichterstattung dieser Zeitung und betont: „Noch bin ich ruhig.— Zum Ende seines Beitrags warnt er: „Man soll schlafende, ruhige Hunde nicht wecken, weil diese können schlimmer werden, als alles, was bisher geschah.—» (Tagblatt 2012).

This extract refers to the publication of a message on social media by an alleged offender accused of setting fire to vehicles. The author of the publication is outraged by the coverage of events in the media. Using warning tactics, he concludes his message with a paremiological expression «Schlafende Hunde soll man nicht wecken» (Varlamova, 2020). Directive orientation is expressed in impersonal construction «Man+soll+nicht+Verb». The metaphorical nature of the statement creates a semantic shade of threat, which enhances the prohibitive impact.

In cases where paremia is used as a reference to popular wisdom, it performs a constative function. The statement of fact in the above-mentioned examples brings the reader to the topic of the article or generalizes the situation. Thus, the compressive function of the paremias is also realized:

«—We will not talk about future results. They can only be discussed when they are achieved» (Husnutdinov et al., 2019);

«—You say that you will gather friends for your birthday ... In general, do you have many friends? — No, there cannot be many of them. A penny in purse is better than a friend in court. I have few friends and a huge amount of money » (Vedomosti: 2021);

«„Nicht alle Eier in einen Korb legen— lautet eine preisgekrönte Börsenweisheit. Das Risiko breit zu streuen, ist die wohl wichtigste Regel der Geldanlage. Doch wie breit ist breit genug gestreut?» (Frankfurter Allgemeine 2021);

«Weil man das Fell des Bären nicht verteilen kann, bevor der Bär erlegt ist, wie es so schön heißt. Wir warten den Ausgang des Mitgliedervotums ab. Ich habe ein paar Überlegungen, aber wir haben noch keine fertige Liste» (Werra Rundschau: 2021), etc.

Within the framework of mass media discourse, paremiological sayings with prohibitive semantics are frequently found in headings. In this case, the role of paremias is to "summarize" the information of the article and create an attractive emotional picture in order to captivate the reader. In this case, the implementation of the accentuation function is assumed.

## **4. Summary**

The connection between language and reality occurs due to coming out of the internal elements of our consciousness with the help of material linguistic signs in their simple forms of realization – words, sentences, texts, and discourse. The main goal of mass media discourse is to influence through the presentation of semantic and evaluative information. This goal is achieved with the help of various communication means and channels. When analyzing illustrative material on the example of linguistic means of mass media discourse, it is important to emphasize one of the main roles of their functioning – the ability to transform and, thus, create a greater impact in order to convey the author's point of view. The main tasks of further research of mass media discourse are to study issues related to the structural organization of linguistic phenomena in the text, establish the presence of semantic transformations, determine pragmatic functions, and study issues of perception and interpretation of communicative means and channels by participants of speech communication within the framework of a communicative situation.

## **5. Conclusions**

Mass media discourse, covering different functional varieties of the language, turns into a powerful system that influences, first of all, the lexical layer of the language. The emergence of a large number of foreign words, xenisms, occasionalisms and their consolidation in the lexicon is explained by the rapid changes in social and scientific life and, above all, by the process of globalization, which is associated with the immensity of information flows. As a result, the destruction of old, lexically conditioned syntactic connections and the emergence of new ones take place.

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