Manifestation of Stylistic Devices in German Media Texts on Ukraine Crisis

Olha Pochapska

Applied Linguistics Department, Lviv Polytechnic National University, UKRAINE, Lviv, S. Bandery street 12, E-mail: olha.pochapska@gmail.com

Abstract – The paper attempts to describe stylistic peculiarities of modern media text. The articles for research were chosen from the German newspaper; they cover the events in the east of Ukraine which are known in the western mass media as Ukraine Crisis. As a result, this study raises a question: how the application of stylistic devices is connected with the function of media texts.

Key words – media linguistics, media text, news coverage, stylistics, stylistic devices, Ukraine crisis

I. Theoretical background

The first newspaper *Relation aller Fürnemmen und gedenckwürdigen Historien* was published in 1607 in Strasbourg and laid the ground for print media. [5] Obviously, the modern news industry is completely different from the one in the 17th century; nowadays along with traditional print media, it comprises broadcast news, which are distributed via radio and television, and Internet news, which target at the Internet users.

According to the German scholar Margarete Rehm, printed newspapers have to fulfil four criteria. Firstly, the content of a newspaper must be accessible to the readers, so that is a criterion of publicity. Secondly, any newspaper or magazine is to come out on regular basis, it corresponds to periodicity. Thirdly, people are interested in learning the latest news, which is why the print media should deal with up-to-date information and meet the criterion of currency. Finally, if the newspaper aims at responding to information needs of wide circle of readers and consists of multiple sections such as domestic news, international news, politics, business, sports, arts, weather, etc., it satisfies the criterion of universality. [4]

Delivering news to the audience is a kind of verbal communication, so scholars took a strong interest in mass media language and its use. Since 1970s, they issue research papers on language functioning in mass communication. The Russian linguist Tatiana Dobrosklonskaya in her book notices that "the authors of those papers analyzed media texts within the framework of various academic traditions, including sociolinguistics, functional stylistics and pragmatics, discourse theory, content analysis, cognitive linguistics and rhetorical criticism. The attention was focused on a wide range of issues: from defining the status of media language in terms of functional stylistics and methods of describing different types of media texts to the impact of sociocultural factors and language techniques of media influence on mass and individual consciousness." [2] As a result, a new academic discipline was founded; it got its name by British scholar John Corner in the article *The Scope of Media Linguistics.*

Media linguistics is a branch of applied linguistics, the International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA) established the research network Media Linguistics which links applied linguists who address crucial aspects of text production (written, oral and online) in the domain of public discourse in general and news media in particular. The aim of the newly emerging field of media linguistics is to investigate the highly complex and dynamic interplay of language use in public spheres, newsrooms, and news source domains such as business or politics. Teun van Dejk, Martin Montgomery, Allan Bell, Norman Fairclough, and Robert Fowler belong to those scholars who made a significant contribution to the new field of studies.

The basic notion of media linguistics is a concept of media text. In contrast with traditional notion of text, the definition of the media text is broader. Ronald Carter explains that the essence of this concept could be summed up as follows: a traditional for linguistics definition of a text as a "coherent and integral stretch of language either spoken or written", when taken to the sphere of mass communication, considerably expands its meaning. In mass media, the concept of a text goes beyond the formal boundaries of a verbal sign system, and approaches its semiotic interpretation, when a 'text' refers to a stretch of any type of signs, not necessarily verbal. [3]

Media texts fulfil different functions, this fact let classify them into four types – 1) news, 2) comment and analysis, 3) features, and 4) advertising. [2]

All news stories can be labeled as hard news or soft news. In the general run of things, hard news deals with such topics as international and internal politics, economics and finance, science, whereas soft news usually center on the lives of individuals and has little, if any, perceived urgency. Hard news refer to events of considerable significance and usually appear on the front page

The *aim* of the research is to analyze major stylistic characteristics of media texts. The *object* is the media text as a specific type of text. The *subject* is stylistic peculiarities of the text. The investigated articles were selected from the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) and they all concern the Ukraine crisis and the events in the east of the country Ukraine.

The FAZ is a centre-right liberal-conservative German newspaper, founded in 1949. The newspaper is comes out daily in Frankfurt am Main. The articles in question were published in the issue Nr. 31 on February 6, 2015 prior to the summit in Minsk on 11 February 2015, and fall under umbrella of hard news.

II. Analysis of lexical stylistic devices in the media text

The articles were analyzed from the stylistic aspect.

One of important feature of news article is use of **attributive and adverbial modifiers (epithets)**. This stylistic device is aims at giving an evaluation of properties, features or qualities of living beings and phenomena. In the analyzed articles the following examples of were found: *unbeirrbare und bisher unaufhaltsame militärische Aggression; neoimperalistische Politik; berechtigte Sorge; ein blutiger und opferreicher Krieg; die grundlegende*

Asymmetrie in diesem Konflikt; Die jüngste Eskalation; rationale Argumenten; agieren und reagieren zögerlich; agieren opportunistisch.

Another lexical stylistic device found in the media texts is **metaphor**. Metaphor is a transference of names of two living beings, things or phenomena based on the associated similarity of their features or properties.[1] This device is illustrated by the following sentence:

Ist die Welt ein Pulverfass?

Newly coined words – **neologisms** – are also present in the researched texts. Thus, the term *Putinismus* is used to characterise the policies of the Russian president Vladimir Putin and his system of government.

Die Wertehierarchie des real existierenden Putinismus anders aussieht als die der westlichen Demokratien.

The writer also employs some **terms** related to specific terminological systems. For instance, we meet an economic term *Kosten-Nutzen-Rechnung* (Eng. Benefit-cost analysis)

Describing stylistic characteristics of lexical units, one concludes that the articles are written in formal **register**, however for some reasons the author uses words or phrases that usually occur in literary or spoken context of language. For example, *Einhalt bieten; preisen; agieren; auf einer Mission definitive sein; sondieren die Schwächen; den russischen Präsidenten aber nicht zu bremsen; um Frieden in der Ukraine ringen.*

The use of figures of contrast is common for such kind of texts. Antithesis is a rhetorical figure based on deliberate co-occurrence of two opposite in their essence, but having certain connection notions or things. In our case, these are *ein kraftstrotzender Ostens und der dekadente Westen.*

III. Analysis of syntactic stylistic devices in the media text

Syntactic stylistic devices are based on word order changes, interaction of syntactic structures in context and transposition of meaning and connection of constituent parts.

Parcellation is a stylistic device the essence of which lies in splitting a sentence into parts separating them by full stops.[1]

Leider nicht. Wir sollten ihn mit allen Mitteln vermeiden. Aber die Lage ist sehr gefährlich.

In order to lay emphasis on some points, the journalists use **rhetorical questions** that actually can be manifested in the form of a question itself or in the form of an exclamation statement.[1]

*Der vielstimmige Aufschrei „**Bloß keine Waffen liefern!**" wird dabei, um ein Wort der Kanzlerin zu benutzen, nicht hilfreich sein.*

Ist die Welt ein Pulverfass?

Diese Feuer kommen uns sehr nah. Wird das Moskau Einhalt gebieten?

IV. Compositional patterns in media text sentences

Anaphora is the repeated word or word-combination at the beginning of each consecutive syntactic structure. In the given articles the following examples of the rhetorical device occur:

Es brennt im Osten, es brennt im Süden.

Es geht nicht nur um die Zukunft der Ukraine, es geht um die Zukunft Russlands und die Zukunft Europas.

Mal zu viert zusammen noch mit dem französischen Präsidenten François Hollande, mal bilateral.

Conclusions

In general, this research shows the variety of stylistic devices employed in the modern media text. Among the most used devices, we singled out epithets and metaphors on the lexical level of language; parcellation and rhetoric questions on the syntactic level, as well as anaphor that is a compositional pattern of a sentence. The usage of these rhetorical figures is related to the functions of the newspaper texts, which are to inform the target audience and to form public opinion about current events in the society.

References

[1] Хомицька І. Контрастивна стилістика англійської та української мов / Ірина Хомицька. – Львів: видавництво Львівської політехніки, 2014. – 291 с.

[2] Добросклонская Т. Г. Медиалингвистика. Системный подход к изучению языка СМИ (Современная английская медиаречь) / Т. Г. Добросклонская. – Москва: Флинта, 2008.

[3] Carter, Ronald (1993) Introducing applied linguistics an A-Z guide London: Penguin

[4] Rehm, M.: Information und Kommunikation in Geschichte und Gegenwart. (1994) Digitalisiert und mit Erlaubnis der Autorin in das Internet gebracht von W. Umstätter (1997)

[5] Weber J. Strassburg, 1605: The Origins of the Newspaper in Europe / Johannes Weber. // German History. – 2006. – №24. – С. 387–412.