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Fascination as a communication category on the Internet (with reference to the Russian portal Rambler.ru)

1. Introduction

Recently, the information function of journalism has been replaced, moved to the background by the persuasive function,[1] and one of the most important tools of persuasion is fascination, i.e. the confusion of the addressee. Fascination is a characteristic of many public discourses, it is based on psychological complexes built into human behavior programs, such as sensation-seeking. The object of the presented analysis are websites on the Internet, especially offered by the Russian portal Rambler.ru. The author will present the results of the study of the content of several start pages in terms of the extent to which they contribute to the sensation of novelty, curiosity, sensationality, thus fulfilling the function intended by

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[1] C. Dowd, "The scrabble of language towards persuasion: Changing behaviors in journalism," [in:] *Persuasive Technology. 8th International Conference PERSUASIVE 2013. Proceedings*, vol. 8722, ed. S. Berkovsky, J. Freyne, Berlin 2013; J. P. Farwell, *Persuasion and Power: The Art of Strategic Communication*, Washington 2012; W. Furman, "Czy można odróżnić działania public relations od stronniczego dziennikarstwa?," *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* 58, 2015, no. 1, pp. 176–190; T. Koch, "Journalism or public relations? A quantitative survey of custom publishing editors in Germany," *Public Relations Review* 42, 2016, pp. 345–352; P. MacGregor, "Journalism, public imagination and cultural policy," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 15, 2009, no. 2, pp. 231–244; J. Novak, M. A. Nicolescu, M. Teodorescu, "Negative journalistic communication," *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences* 47, 2015, pp. 131–138; V. Patráš, "On the dynamics of the stylistics of the lexicon in the contemporary online opinion-based media production," *Jazykovedný časopis* 69, 2018, no. 3, pp. 446–461; P. Serra, "Beyond propaganda and the Internet: The ethics of journalism," *Comunicação e Sociedade* 25, 2014, pp. 301–310.

the creators of the sites, in the first place attracting attention and prolonging the contact (for the purpose of posting advertising information).

2. Communication: Report aspect vs. command aspect

The Internet has inherited the basic principles of journalistic rhetoric, radicalizing certain aspects of impact on recipients using the latest electronic tools. In connection with this, the "five sad truths about public communication" may be noted, mainly in relation to the press:

— nobody notices us, and of the few recipients who have noticed us;

— nobody listens to us and reads us, and of the few who have heard or read us;

— no one understands us, and of the few who have understood us;

— nobody wants to agree with us, and of the few, who have agreed with us;

— nobody remembers us.[2]

These "sad truths" can be modified in such a way that — after removing the negation — they become public communication directives, applicable not only in journalism but also in the field of marketing communication and public relations:

— (Let them) notice us.

— (Let them) listen to us, read us, and use our services and our products.

— (Let them) understand us.

— (Let them) agree with us, accept our actions.

— (Let them) remember us.

Interestingly, when T. Gackowski and M. Łączyński[3] write about the psychological dimension of image (of an institution, organization, person, brand, etc.), they quote five processes and information processing mechanisms that closely resemble W. Pisarek's "truths":

— perception — whether the content will be noticed;

— identification/categorization — whether the information has an impact on the image of a particular subject, and within which cognitive category will it be processed;

— assessment — whether the information contributes to a significant, positive or negative (in the case of "black" PR) valuation of the subject;

— interaction/reinterpretation — how the attitudes previously fixed in the mind affect the image;

— memory — whether the given image will stay in the consciousness of the recipients.

The order of these processes reflects the modular and partly successive nature of the human cognitive system, but there is also a pragmatic and cultural

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[2] W. Pisarek, *Nowa retoryka dziennikarska*, Kraków 2002, p. 9.

[3] Ed. T. Gackowski, M. Łączyński, *Metody badania wizerunku w mediach. Czym jest wizerunek? Jak i po co należy go badać?*, Warszawa 2009, p. 80.

dimension of such processes. The pragmatic dimension is that the sender's communication intention can have more or less global perspectives. For example, in the case when the content is known, the communication procedure consists of activating an appropriate nerve stimulation center and activating an already existing network of semantic connections. A reminder advertisement in the field of marketing communication has such character. In the case of such well-known brands as Mercedes-Benz or Coca-Cola, the promotion basically boils down to achieving two goals (using the terminology of Pisarek): "They notice us" and "They remember us."

The cultural dimension of managing the information processes is that, depending on the cultural paradigm, certain aspects of impact on the addressees are increased or reduced. Contemporary postmodern culture, based on computer technologies, affects this dimension: there is the ennoblement of perception and, conversely, the marginalization of memory[4] — largely due to mobile devices functioning as multifunctional "extensions of man," in M. McLuhan's (1964) terminology. The semantic aspect of information processing (identification, categorization, classification) increasingly gives way to other aspects: axiological (assessment) and pragmatic (interaction). This is clearly indicated by the characteristics of postmodernism as described in the literature[5]: visuality, i.e. the priority of image information over language narrative; "hysterical sublime" as an aesthetic experience manifested in communication; "declarative exhilaration," i.e. an intentional focus on a schematic, external, dilettante approach to phenomena and problems; disappearance of the opposition of high and low culture; "the waning of affect" — an ironic interpretation of reality; intentional intertextuality; blurring the border between facts and fiction.

Referring to G. Bateson's theory,[6] it can be concluded that the "report aspect" of messages is definitely dominated by the "command aspect." With reference to linguistic communication, this phenomenon has been described as "pragmatics without semantics."[7]

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[4] Viewers of the TV Eurovision Song Contest are not interested in music but in the spectacle. According to M. Mańka, a specialist in the field of image creation, the festival focuses on watching rather than listening to what the participants of the contest are singing about (https://tvs.pl/informacje/slowianskie-rytmy-i-ciala-rozpalily-widzow-donatan-i-cleo-w-finale-eurowizji-2014-05-10 [accessed: 19.05.2019]).

[5] F. Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, New York 1993; W. Hochbruck, "Amerikanische politische Rhetorik in der Postmoderne: (noch) keine neue 'Word oder,'" *Sprache und Literatur* 75/76, 1995, pp. 17–26.

[6] J. Ruesch, G. Bateson, *Communication: The Social Matrix of Psychiatry*, New York 1968, p. 197; see also: D. H. Olson, "Empirically unbinding the double bind," *A Review of Research and Conceptual Formulations. Family Process* 11, 1972, pp. 69–94; M. Koopmans, *Schizophrenia and the Family II: Paradox and Absurdity in Human Communication Reconsidered*, http://www.goertzel.org/dynapsyc/1998/KoopmansPaper.htm [accessed: 19.05.2019].

[7] A. Kiklewicz, *Czwarte królestwo. Język a kontekst w dyskursach współczesności*, Warszawa 2012, p. 63.

3. Fascination

Characteristic for postmodernism, irrationalism of attitudes and behavior is itself manifested in the "ethos of infantilism."[8] The semiotic dimension of this phenomenon means superficial, schematic, unspecified processing of semantic information, and an emphasis on emotional states, moods, feelings, and affects.[9] Fascination has become the most important form of persuasive influence on the addressees, and its aim is to stimulate or support their perceptive activity, to direct attention to the communicative contact. On the one hand, fascination as an intensified focus on a particular message contributes to the loss of semantically relevant information and entails dynamization of the reception process.[10] On the other hand, fascination also evokes an opposite effect, namely makes recipient's mental activity conditional on the sender — his will, desires, and mental world view.[11]

Fascination has two aspects: transmitting and receiving. In the first sense, fascination is a suggestive influence on the addressee, i.e. his enchantment and enslavement, and in a second sense, it means the pathological state of the subject's psyche, which perceives a symbolic stimulus (e.g. language expression) in a non-critical, schematic manner depending on the prevailing emotions. In this sense the word *fascination* is widely used in various discourses, for example *fascination with death*, *fire*, *the West*, *Japanese culture*, *women*, *a book*, *a car*, *Jesus*, *technological development*, etc. Therefore, fascination not only entails the intentional actions of the sender but also a certain predisposition of the recipient, his special semiotic sensitivity which, as noted by L. V. Kozyarevich,[12] is sometimes expressed as "empathetic identification with the text."

Fascination understood in this way is related to another psychological phenomenon which is *sensation-seeking*.[13] According to this German researcher, "people reach for the media when they want to regulate their own inclination to seek impressions." The theory of optimal stimulation postulates that the recipient

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[8] B. R. Barber, *Skonsumowani: jak rynek psuje dzieci, infantylizuje dorosłych i połyka obywateli*, Warszawa 2008; H. Rarot, "Rola mechanizmu sublimacyjnego w epoce ponowoczesności," *Kultura i Wartości* 18, 2016, p. 57.

[9] A. Clark, "'Fascination,' 'contagion' and naming what we do: Rethinking the transcendent function," *Analytical Psychology* 2010, no. 55, pp. 636–649; F. J. Sirois, "Aesthetic experience," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 89, 2006, pp. 127–142; M. Thys, *Fascinatie. Een fenomenologisch-psychoanalytische verkenning van het onmenselijke*, Amsterdam 2006; M. Thys, "On fascination and fear of annihilation," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 98, 2016, pp. 633–655.

[10] A. V. Petrovskij, M. G. Âroševskij, *Kratkij psihologičeskij slovar'*, Moskva 1985, p. 374.

[11] W. W. Atkinson, *Mental Fascination*, Hollister 2010, http://www.yogebooks.com/english/atkinson/1907mentalfascination.pdf [accessed: 19.05.2019].

[12] L. V. Kozârevič, "Fascinacija i empatiâ v aspekte perevoda kak kategorii kommunikacii," *Vestnik Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo lingvističeskogo universiteta. Seriya: gumanitarnye nauki* 669, 2013, p. 139.

[13] See, in relation to the psychology of the media, P. Winterhoff-Spurk, *Medienpsychologie. Eine Einführung*, Stuttgart 1999.

of the media service has a need to maintain a specific (individually diversified) level of internal activity. In the situation where the activity falls below this level, the subject feels bored and begins to look for new incentives to return to the expected level of inner activity. The use of symbolic means for this purpose, e.g. available on the Internet, is qualified as sublimation, considered by some research-ers[14] as one of the features of postmodernism.

There is also another explanation for the phenomenon of fascination, i.e. the complex of *neophilia*. Each new piece of information requires the use of un-conventional methods of interpretation, and thus to a greater or lesser extent is associated with the intensity of mental processes, especially as regards their sen-sory and emotional components. A. Maslow[15] was among the first to describe this phenomenon, and new publications have shown that it is a fundamental factor in the development of culture,[16] as well as a feature of personality and of consumer behavior.[17]

Due to the existence of a set of emotional needs of subjects (such as pleas-ure, entertainment, anxiety, etc.) in the culture system an area of institutionalized activity has been created, intended to satisfy such needs. This phenomenon can be explained by referring to B. Malinowski's functional theory of culture.[18] Just as the economic system satisfies the demand for production and reproduction of material values, the political system satisfies the need to organize social relations, etc., so mass culture and the media are used to ensure the need to constantly main-tain a certain level of emotional stimulation of individuals.

The cultural (institutionalized) sources of fascination are diverse in this re-spect and the contemporary offer of mass culture is very rich: it includes instru-ments of aesthetic or pseudoesthetic impact, such as adventure, fantasy, criminal and sensational literature; many types of film (action, western, horror, comedy, etc.); entertainment TV programs (cabaret, talk shows, reality shows, etc.), as well as a developed sector of services related to entertainment and partly associated with risk, e.g. exclusive tourism (extreme trips, etc.), exotic sports (such as moun-tain climbing, bathing in icy water, parachute jumps, free jump), attractions, etc.

The relationship of journalism to this sphere of public culture is ambiva-lent: on the one hand, the task of journalists is to inform society about the most important events, and thus to ensure the optimal level of collective conscious-ness as a condition of effective communication at different levels of the social system. Fascination in this cultural program has an auxiliary character; it serves to enhance perception, processing and consolidation of messages. For example,

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[14] H. Rarot, *Rola mechanizmu sublimacyjnego…*, pp. 51–68.

[15] A. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, New York 1970.

[16] G. Miller, *Umysł w zalotach. Jak wybory seksualne kształtowały naturę człowieka*, Poznań 2004, p. 456.

[17] I. Perianova, "Identity and food in the globalizing world," [in:] *Globalizing in English Stud-ies*, ed. M. Georgieva, A. James, Cambridge 2010, p. 23.

[18] B. Malinowski, *Kultura i jej przemiany. Dzieła*, vol. 9, Warszawa 2000, p. 31.

S. I. Bernshteyn[19] has written about the need to create favorable conditions for the concentration of the listeners' attention in the case of radio programs.

On the other hand, some features of journalism are similar to the discourses of entertainment and fascination. First of all, the requirement of profiling reality in terms of actuality, novelty and, most recently, sensationalism contributes to this. Journalists (especially in the case of the popular, "boulevard" media), pay attention to various types of anomalies and pathologies, which are both the object of the recipients' expectations and the stimulus to their fascination states. G. G. Pocheptsov[20] writes that, if a journalist has a choice between two situations: *Dog bites man* and *Man bites dog*, he will certainly give priority to the second situation.

Journalism as an area of public communication has recently undergone significant changes, and one of these is dependence on the sphere of public relations and on the marketing activities of commercial companies. Such factors as market segmentation and stiffer competition are forcing editorial offices to look for new sources of investment, especially through cooperation with the marketing sector of production and service enterprises.[21] According to the World Press Trends Database,[22] in 2016 advertising revenues in the press and news media in the global dimension amounted to 68 trillion USD, i.e. 44.4% of all advertising profits. Advertising revenues are growing particularly in the field of Internet media: in 2016, an increase of 5.4% was recorded, and in the last five years an increase of 32%. R. Ostrowski rightly writes: "The disadvantage of the Internet is that most servers, and hence websites and […] search engines, are owned by large media corporations. Thus, the network's egalitarianism is under question" (transl. — A. K.).[23]

The need to transmit advertisements imposes on media broadcasters some obligations and at the same time restrictions: advertising as a small-format text does not require a longer processing procedure and in this case the contact is the most important, so the sender is interested in making such contact happen. For this purpose, the creators of web pages make use of the means of fascination, so as to attract and hold the recipient's attention, and the most desired effect is the prolongation of contact by redirecting the user to another browser window in which another portion of advertisements will be offered.

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[19] S. I. Bernŝtejn, *Âzyk radio*, Moskva 1977, p. 26.

[20] G. G. Počepcov, *Teoriâ kommunikacii*, Moskva 2001, p. 211.

[21] M. Chyliński, "Dziennikarstwo i public relations: równowaga sił w ekonomice, zainteresowania publiczności," *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* 54, 2011, no. 3–4, p. 32; M. Chyliński, S. Russ-Mohl, *Dziennikarstwo*, Warszawa 2007, p. 281.

[22] World Press Trends Database, http://www.wptdatabase.org/world-press-trends-2017-facts-and-figures [accessed: 19.05.2019].

[23] R. Ostrowski, "Nowe media — Internet. Szansa czy zagrożenie dla polskiego społeczeństwa?," [in:] *Media masowe w praktyce społecznej*, ed. D. Waniek, W. Adamowski, Warszawa 2007, p. 302.

Fascination is also one of these image communication tools, as it contributes to the market promotion of the source of information. With an emphasis on the publication of sensational, spontaneous or provocative texts, editorial boards of tabloids, such as the German *Bild*, the Polish *Super Express* or the Russian *Your Day*, are creating their own brand, thanks to which they are in constant contact with the selected social group. The principle of expressiveness, which G. Leech[24] describes as a commitment to give the most personal and emotional tone of expression so that the recipient knows what the sender's attitude is to the transmitted text, is also magnified in youth magazines. W. Kajtoch[25] writes about the "unbelievable intensity of experienced feelings" as the characteristic feature of such magazines. As an example, he cites an excerpt from the magazine *Popcorn*:

(1) Szalony wygląd, dźwięki, wybryki na scenie — wszystko to jest do stopnia zwariowane, że można to albo pokochać, albo znienawidzić. Ci, którzy zrozumieli ich muzykę i przesłanie, są wniebowzięci, zaś ci, którzy tego nie pojęli — drżą z przerażenia.

In the world of youth magazines, everyone is crazy:

(2) szaleńcy z Progidy
(3) szalona Spajseta
(4) największe świry muzyki
(5) LO 27. Co nowego w szalonej szkole?
(6) Keith wariował na scenie, a Liam poza nią.
(7) Rozkręca się właśnie szalona impreza.
(8) Tłum ogarnia totalne szaleństwo.
(9) Wyślijcie im najbardziej zwariowane informacje pod słońcem!
(10) Dziewczyna wolałaby zostać dziennikarką i prowadzić szalone życie.[26]

Irrationalism becomes the dominant principle of behavior in the whole area of popular culture. There is a kind of infection syndrome: crazy idols > crazy journalists > crazy readers.

In a similar way, their own style of fascination is created by Internet portals.

4. Tools of fascination

Linguists list many methods used to obtain the effect of fascination: symbols (so-called flag words); metaphors, allusions, reminiscences, semantic phantoms; imprecise, enigmatic messages; words and constructions with expressive character; imitating direct dialogue; disruption of semantic consistency (paradox, alogism, antithesis); rhythmization of the message, etc.[27] Fascination is also contributed to by intentional violation of the requirements of the literary norm and a

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[24] G. N. Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics*, London 1983, p. 24.

[25] W. Kajtoch, "Odlotowe bez dwóch zdań! Kultura języka, stylu, perswazji w czasopismach dla młodzieży," *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* 42, 1999, no 3–4, p. 97.

[26] Ibid.

[27] E. V. Omel'čenko, "Fascinativnaâ sostavlâûŝaâ v neprâmoj kommunikacii," *Filologičeskie nauki. Voprosy teorii i praktiki* 19, 2013, no. 1, pp. 136–139; M. V. Povarnicyna, "Manipulâciâ,
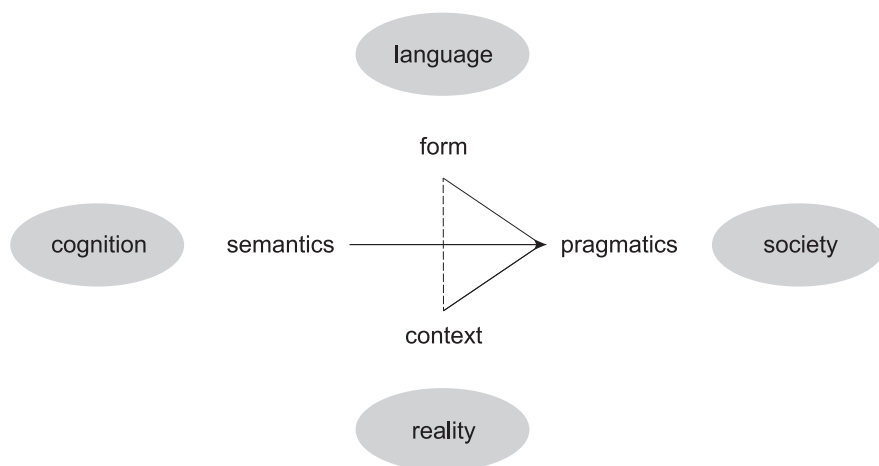
Figure 1. Four parameters of communication activity

Source: Author's own work.

wide dissemination in public communication of not only colloquial elements but also jargon, environmental, and dialectal elements, contrasting with the standard language.[28]

Different forms and means of fascination can be presented by taking into account four parameters of communication activity: 1) language code; 2) cognitive system; 3) social system; 4) physical reality.[29] Each of these parameters is implemented within more specified categories, which constitute a functional unity.

Figure 1 indicates that through semantic information (meaning), encoded in the form of linguistic (or other) signs, adapted to the context, i.e. the conditions and the scene of language activity, the subject pursues a specific goal, in particular an impact on another person or social group.

The configuration of the separate categories depends on the area of language activity and the appropriate functional style. In qualitative journalism there is a certain balance of all four factors; however, the pragmatic effect (the recipients' knowledge about current events) depends in the first place on the semantic information encoded in the message. The journalist's message, as mentioned earlier, is sometimes subordinated to other types of consideration, especially attracting and holding the recipients' attention in order to enable the transmission of advertisements. The representative (semantic) function remains here in the background, and the semantic aspect often boils down to axiological information and appeals to the recipients of archetypes recorded in the minds of the addressees.

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suggestiâ, attrakciâ i fascinaciâ v kreolizovannom tekste," *Izvestiâ Volgogradskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogičeskogo universiteta* 106, 2016, no. 2, pp. 117–124.

[28] N. I. Klušina, "Novyje štampy novoj žurnalistiki," *Russkaja reč* 2010, no. 1, p. 62.

[29] A. Kiklewicz, "Manieryzm językowy jako zjawisko stylistyczne (na przykładzie języka polskiego i rosyjskiego)," *Stylistyka* 26, 2017, p. 85.

The source material on this subject consists of Russian Internet portals. I will demonstrate the mechanisms of fascination using one of the most popular portals, Rambler.ru (created in 1996), as an example. The portal homepage has a collage appearance, consisting of symmetrically arranged announcements/leads (usually over 30 leads). Expanding information and moving to the next window is possible after clicking on the appropriate row. An example of this is the view of the browser's home page from October 2, 2018 (Figure 2).
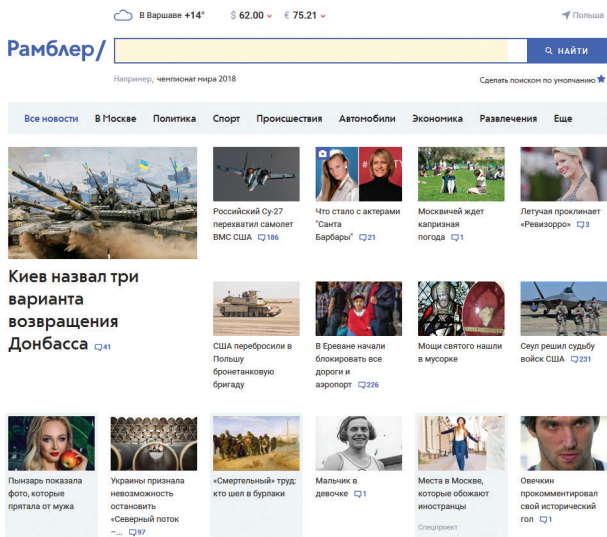

Figure 2. Home page of Rambler.ru from October 2, 2018
Source: www.rambler.ru [accessed: 2.10.2018].

Presenting many advertisements on one page is an intentional communication strategy. First of all, in this way the creator/provider signals to the reader that the information offer has a wide scope, it concerns many areas of life. This is an example of the "everything at once" principle characteristic of postmodernism. From the semantic point of view, this means that in one field of perception there are diametrically diverse types of content, which is connected with a lack of coherence, which in turn favors the interest of the viewer, mobilizes attention (each new thread requires the use of a different categorization module), and to some extent also causes a state of fascination, especially in view of the fact that the semantic diversity of individual window elements exceeds the possibilities of their efficient, consistent, comprehensive interpretation. The selection of the information on the site, as well as its processing in such conditions, at the very least is beyond the recipient's control, and shows certain traits of randomness and irrationality.

The genre form of the advertisement is connected with the need of compressing semantic information, which gives the sender the possibility of its subjective

alteration according to his own attitude.[30] The advertisement style is used by the creators of the Rambler.ru portal to control the interpretation of semantic information contained in the texts. For example, an article published in December 2015, indicating that the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States (CIA) had provided Turkish authorities with information from special services, according to which terrorist acts against tourists from Russia could be prepared in Turkey, was presented on the website in the form of the lead: *Terrorist acts against Russians*.

In public communication, especially on the Internet, non-verbal methods of fascination are also used.[31] The creators of the website took good care of the "visual environment": each lead is provided with an illustration, usually in the form of a photo. Photos, on the one hand, contribute to the revival and diversification of the message; on the other hand, as shown in an article on this subject,[32] images can reproduce other facts than those described in the text; in other words, they serve misinformation.

5. Rambler.ru: Semantic factors of fascination

Attractiveness of the message in the media is achieved with the use of semantic, formal and contextual tools. When it comes to semantic tools, the goal of fascination is, in particular, to prefer information about special, unusual, exceptional and catastrophic events. As an example, the following texts could be seen on the Rambler.ru homepage in April 2014:

(1) В Японии раскрыли планы Терезы Мэй против РФ.
(2) Следователь утонул в сауне "Зимняя вишня".
(3) Таджикская авиакомпания остановила полеты в Россию.
(4) Як-3 протаранил машину при посадке.
(5) Байкалу грозит превращение в "Северное море китайцев".
(6) Врачей насторожили обстоятельства смерти Мавроди.
(7) В Домодедово девушка избила пограничника.
(8) Любимая песня сына Плющенко шокировала сеть.
(9) Аман Тулеев подал в отставку.
(10) Паводок в Алтайском крае.
(11) В Японии прошёл турнир по боям на подушках.

The sensational nature of these headlines clearly reflects the typical style of tabloids. For the analysis of the semantic tools of fascination on the Internet, four aspects of the information contained in the leads were distinguished: 1) thematic

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[30] A. Kiklewicz, "Fragmentaciâ teksta kak sredstvo persuazivnosti v informacionnyh internet-servisah," *Przegląd Wschodnioeuropejski* 8, 2017, no. 1, pp. 185–207.

[31] M. Danesi, "Kinesics," [in:] *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, ed. K. Brown, Amsterdam-Boston-Heidelberg 2006, pp. 207–213; L. V. Kozârevič-Zozulâ, "Fascinacija immanentnostʹ polit*i*českogo flirta: verbalʹnyj i neverbalʹnyj aspekty," *Mova* 24, 2015, p. 10.

[32] A. Kiklewicz, "Infantylizm semantyczny w dyskursach publicznych," *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* 58, 2015, no. 4, pp. 763–794; A. Kiklewicz, "Političeskaâ propaganda v sovremennyh rossijskih SMI: epistemologičeskij aspekt," *Przegląd Wschodnioeuropejski* 6, 2015, no. 2, pp. 179–199.

domain (the topic of the message); 2) event evaluation; 3) novelty of the event; 4) intra- or extracultural reference (i.e. concerning Russia or other countries).

In this respect, three randomly chosen editions of the Rambler.ru main page were analyzed: from 1, 21 and 30 April 2018. Semantic field analysis of all leads produced the results shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Semantic fields of information contained at the home pages of Rambler.ru

Subject	1.04.2018	21.04.2018	30.04.2018	Total	
Administration	0	1	1	2	
Finances	2	0	0	2	
Gender	0	1	0	1	
History	0	2	1	3	
Language	0	1	0	1	
Natural disaster, catastrophe	0	2	2	4	
Mass culture	0	1	1	2	
Media/Internet	4	2	1	7	
Media/journalism	0	1	2	3	
Medicine	1	1	1	2	
Fashion	1	0	0	1	
Politics	12	8	5	25	15.9%
Work	0	0	2	2	
Privacy	3	6	9	18	11.5%
Industry	0	2	2	4	
Crime, breaking the law	0	1	1	2	
Nature	3	0	2	5	
Relaxation, entertainment	4	0	0	4	
Religion	1	0	0	1	
Sex, erotic	1	2	2	5	
Sport	0	0	1	1	
Interpersonal relations in private sphere	2	1	0	3	
Interpersonal relations in public sphere	3	2	0	5	
Art/film	1	8	4	13	8.3%
Worldview, knowledge	0	1	0	1	
Technology	0	4	0	4	
Transport	3	3	2	8	5.1%
Army, weapons, armed conflict	0	8	7	15	9.6%
Health, life/death	4	1	4	9	5.7%
Animals	0	1	3	4	
Total				157	

Source: Author's own work.

The source material has 30 different thematic domains, which indicates a large variety of information. On the one hand, this means a wide range of information offer but, on the other hand, as has already been pointed out, semantic incoherence contributes to fascination. Despite the large thematic diversity, it should be noted that there are no references to some important areas, such as science, education, fiction, social movements, law and the judiciary, agriculture, and civil rights. The creator of the website prefers a certain value system, of course also taking into account the expectations of the public.

Among the topics which were mentioned in the announcements, there is also no balance in terms of the frequency of their occurrence. There are several thematic domains with the most visible profile: politics — 15.9% of references; private life — 11.5%; army, weapons, armed conflict — 9.6%; film/art — 8.3%; health, life/ death — 5.7%; transport — 5.1%. As can be seen, social problems usually concern two aspects: the political and the military. The fact that in the analyzed material up to a quarter of all the thematic references coincides with these aspects indicates that, according to the creators of the site, these aspects of social life are the most fascinating for contemporary Russians. The creators of the portal, as can be judged on the basis of analysis and quantitative data, assume that the recipients are also interested in private life, mainly of mass culture celebrities, health problems, and the theme of travel, while in the entertainment sphere film attracts the most attention.

In terms of axiological significance, the information offer of the portal is also clearly profiled. Neutral texts represent only 23.3% of the total. The largest percentage, 57.3%, is attributed to negative texts in which various types of threats are described (military, economic, environment, etc.), disasters, accidents, conflicts, crises, disputes and others. In this way, a disastrous image of the world is created in the minds of the Internet users, although — on the other hand — it can also be explained by the expectations of the addressees, in particular the search for impressions mentioned in point 2. As we know (for example, from research on the theory of cultivation) the experience of anxiety and threat favors an interest in media information and increases its value.

The requirement of novelty in journalistic discourses was already mentioned in the previous point. In the case of news journalism on the Internet, which, as noted, draws two-thirds of advertising profits, this aspect of public communication has definitely increased (and novelty almost always goes hand in hand with fascination). The results of the analysis confirmed this postulate; 78.9% of the texts refer to current events, usually those that took place in the recent past, usually in the last 24 hours, or are expected in the near future. A decidedly smaller number of texts deal with general (timeless) events or the distant past.

There is a phenomenon known as "fascination with otherness,"[33] however, in journalism, priority is given to the principle of intraculturability, that is, pref-

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[33] See: D. Sozańska, "Między fascynacją a dystansem. Społeczny odbiór osób chorych psychicznie a ich wizerunek w kulturze masowej — analiza wybranych przypadków," *Labor et Educatio* 2, 2014, pp. 105–115.

erence for themes concerning one own's environment. At the same time, one can assume that the recipients are primarily interested in events in their immediate environment, those that more or less directly affect their experiences and conditions of existence. Therefore, national information usually takes up more space than information from abroad, and in conservative media, such as the Polish Radio Maryja, it covers the entire news offer.

The analyzed material confirms this rule. 73% of all texts concern Russia, including 19.2% of international relations (with the participation of Russia). About 20% of the texts refer to countries and regions, while it should be noted that almost 90% of these texts are negatively marked: almost everything that happens abroad is interpreted as undesirable, unfavorable, disloyal to Russia. It can therefore be concluded that the online portal is cultivating the propaganda slogan "Everyone is against us," which is particularly popular today.

6. Conclusion

The "fascination style" is widespread in public communication, especially in information services on the Internet, which derive profit mainly from advertising and face growing competition in the media services market and so are interested in attracting the attention of an increasing number of users. Fascination is connected with the reconstruction of the mental processes of message processing, and as a result the perceptive and valuing factor is at the forefront. Attracting the attention of recipients contributes to the prolongation of contact with the source of information (thanks to which it is possible to broadcast advertisements), as well as to creating a positive image of the Internet portal. In order to fascinate, various means are used: formal, semantic and contextual (especially the visual environment).

An analysis of the Russian Internet portal Rambler.ru has shown that semantic information is subordinated to the requirements of fascination. Despite the extensive thematic offer, selected topics are preferred: politics, army, private life of celebrities, health. There are topics — such as education, science, human rights, environmental protection and others — which are almost never mentioned on the home page of the portal. The vast majority of texts are axiologically marked, and more than half contain a negative evaluation of the events described. Negative information is common in news about foreign countries (Western Europe and North America). The creators of advertising are focused on the transmission of intracultural information as more relevant. Due to the requirement of relevance, most texts refer to current events.

In conclusion, I wish to state that the Internet portal largely displays tabloid features, such as prevailing extremity, focus on sensationalism, heading style, segmentation/fragmentation of text, collage as a construction principle, a large share of information about entertainment and relaxation, lack of journalism, visuality pressure and others. As we can see, new technologies are not equivalent to a new

quality of social relations. The stylistics of the penny press was created in the 19th century but it is still in demand, and thanks to the new media it is experiencing a kind of renaissance.

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Fascination as a communication category on the Internet (with reference to the Russian portal Rambler.ru)

Summary

The subject of this article is fascination as a type of communicative influence exerted on the addressees, the purpose of which is to attract or to retain attention to the message and/or its source. In public communication, fascination serves to activate the processing of semantic information, to create a positive image of the source of information and its preferences in the face of increasing market competition, and to prolong communicative contact as an opportunity to distribute advertising copy. Fascination is one of the characteristics of modern media culture. Fascination as a stylistic phenomenon is based on different means, which fall into four categories: the language code, the cognitive system (mental thesaurus, world view), the system of social relations, and the physical environment. On the Internet, semantic information is subordinated to the principle of attractiveness. This concerns such characteristics as preference for events in the sphere of politics, occasionality, sensationalism, dangerous traits, and an intracultural attitude.

Keywords: mass-media, journalistic style, mass communication, attractiveness, selection of semantic information

Fascynacja jako kategoria komunikacji w internecie (na przykładzie rosyjskiego portalu Rambler.ru)

Streszczenie

Tematem artykułu jest fascynacja jako rodzaj komunikatywnego wpływu na adresatów, którego celem jest przyciągnięcie lub zwrócenie uwagi na przekaz i/lub jego źródło. W komunikacji publicznej fascynacja służy aktywacji przetwarzania informacji semantycznej, stworzeniu pozytywnego wizerunku źródła informacji i jego preferencji w obliczu rosnącej konkurencji rynkowej oraz prolongacji kontaktu komunikacyjnego jako sposobu emitowania reklam. Fascynacja jest jedną z cech współczesnej kultury medialnej. Jako zjawisko stylistyczne fascynacja jest realizowana za pośrednictwem różnych środków, które dzielą się na cztery kategorie: kod językowy, system kognitywny (tezaurus mentalny, światopogląd), system relacji społecznych i środowisko fizyczne (naturalne). Informacja semantyczna jest w internecie uwarunkowana zasadą atrakcyjności. Dotyczy to takich cech, jak preferowanie wydarzeń w świecie polityki, okazjonalność, sensacja, drażniące treści oraz priorytet treści wewnątrzkulturowych.

Słowa kluczowe: media masowe, komunikacja masowa, styl dziennikarski, atrakcyjność, selekcja informacji semantycznej