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Linguistic creativity and multimodal tropes in cinematic discourse

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Abstract

The present article explores the creative potential of language that is realized in cinematic discourse and is based on the case study of eight popular Soviet comedy films of the 1960s with the overall running time of 670 minutes. The choice of this period is determined by the sociohistorical relevance of the sixties in the development of Russian culture and cinematic art. The goals of this paper are to identify and categorize the verbal means that trigger the creation of cinematic tropes, and to define the transformations that these verbal means acquire as a result of their involvement into constructing cinematic figurativeness. To achieve these goals, a complex methodology has been elaborated. It includes three stages of analysis and rests on conceptions that have been recently developed in linguistics, film studies, and research on multimodality. According to research findings, cinematic figurativeness originates in two kinds of verbal means. Non-figurative verbal means (i.e. words used in their literal meanings; free word-combinations, etc.) and figurative verbal means (i.e. literary metaphors; idioms, etc.) are employed for the creation of three kinds of cinematic tropes: cinematic metonymies, cinematic metaphors, and cinematic irony. In the process of the formation of cinematic tropes, verbal units of both categories are transformed in a variety of ways: structurally, grammatically, semantically, and pragmatically. The investigation has revealed a dual or reverse character that linguistic creativity has in cinematic discourse: verbal units provide the creation of cinematic tropes and at the same time they themselves acquire certain innovative properties. The results could contribute to further studies of creativity in cinematic discourse as well as in other types of multimodal texts, including media, advertising, visual poetry, and electronic literature.

Keywords: *linguistic creativity, (non)figurative means, multimodality, cinematic trope, cinepoetics, cinematic figurativeness*

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Лингвистическая креативность и полимодальные тропы в кинодискурсе

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Аннотация

Настоящая статья посвящена выявлению специфики реализации креативного потенциала языка в кинодискурсе. Исследование проводится на материале восьми популярных советских комедийных фильмов 60-х гг. XX в. общей продолжительностью 670 минут. Выбор данного периода обусловлен социально-исторической значимостью шестидесятих годов в развитии русской культуры и отечественного кинематографа. Цель статьи – идентифицировать и категоризировать вербальные средства, на базе которых создаются кинотропы, а также определить способы их трансформаций в ходе конструирования кинематографической образности. Для решения данных задач разработана комплексная методология, включающая три этапа анализа и опирающаяся на концепции, которые развиваются сегодня в лингвистике, киноведении и исследованиях полимодальности. Согласно результатам, кинематографическая образность берет свое начало в вербальных средствах двух категорий. Необразные вербальные средства (слова с буквальными значениями; переменные словосочетания и т.д.) и образные вербальные средства (литературные метафоры; идиомы и т.д.) служат основой для создания трех типов кинотропов: кинометонимии, кинометафоры и киноиронии. Под влиянием создаваемых ими кинотропов вербальные единицы обеих категорий подвергаются трансформациям: структурным, грамматическим, семантическим и прагматическим. В работе выявлен двойственный или реверсивный характер лингвокреативности в кинодискурсе: вербальные единицы, с одной стороны, обеспечивают создание кинотропов, а, с другой стороны, они сами обретают новые свойства и качества. Полученные результаты способствуют дальнейшему развитию исследований креативности в кинодискурсе, а также в других типах полимодальных текстов, в частности в текстах СМИ, в рекламе, визуальной поэзии и электронной литературе.

Ключевые слова: лингвистическая креативность, (не)образные средства, полимодальность, кинематографический троп, кинопоэтика, кинематографическая образность

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, many sciences (psychology, philosophy, neuroscience, anthropology, social and cognitive sciences, philology, and some others) are involved in studying creativity. Hence, approaches to creativity are numerous. The way this phenomenon is defined depends on many factors including the historical and socio-cultural background, the general level of science or discipline development, subjective preferences and so on. For instance, exploring creativity, Boden singles out P-creative idea (psychological novelty) and H-creative idea (historical novelty), and establishes three types of creativity: combinational,

exploratory, and transformational (Boden 2009: 24–25). According to Sternberg and Lubart, creativity is “the ability to produce work that is both novel (i.e. original, unexpected) and appropriate (i.e. useful, adaptive concerning task constraints)” (Sternberg & Lubart 1999: 3). Aleinikov describes creativity as “a complex and highly regarded ability, skill, and practical activity of producing new (original, innovative) ideas, products, and problem solutions” and emphasizes that “creativity is newness production on the psychological level, while innovation is newness consumption on the social level” (Aleinikov 2013: 398). As Thurlow notes, “creative practice always emerges out of the dialectical tension between fixity and mobility, constraint and freedom, convention and innovation, stricture and defiance, orthodoxy and heterodoxy, and, in the case of language, between ‘grammar’ and ‘poetry’” (Thurlow 2012: 170). In their research, Elgammal and Saleh showed that “to be creative it is not enough to be novel, it has to be influential as well (some others have to imitate it)” (Elgammal & Saleh 2015: 41). The given definitions of creativity present various original insights into this complex phenomenon as well as the specifics of its exploration in different scientific fields.

Over the past three decades, a tendency to interdisciplinary investigations of creativity has been strengthening. One of such intensely developing interdisciplinary domains is the study of creativity in multimodal communication, both natural (or everyday) and artificial (or artistic). Scholars’ special interests are centered around questions of fundamental nature of creative processes in different types of multimodal texts and multimodal discourses (literary, advertising, media, scientific, cinematic, etc.). As Jones claims, “multimodality has always been a central aspect of verbal creativity”; “some of what is inventive and appropriate in a text comes from the way in which words interact with other semiotic modes” (Jones 2015b). In contemporary philology, the study of creative potential of natural language in multimodal communication has a variety of perspectives of development. This variety can be illustrated by a few works described below.

Gibbons explores the application of such creative devices as deviation and conceptual shifts in multimodal literature. She specifies the multimodal literary text as a text in which multiple semiotic modes are used for creative narrative purposes. The scholar points out that “a work of multimodal literature includes not only the verbal orthographic text in the form of printed type; it may also use varied typography, unusual textual layouts and page designs <...>, the inclusions of images such as photographs or illustrations, colour, and so on” (Gibbons 2015: 293–294). Resting on Hallet’s conception, Gibbons analyzes extracts from three literary works (*House of Leaves*, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, and *The Boy Detective Fails*) and describes the following creative conceptual shifts or creative deviations employed in them: from ‘writing to designing’, from ‘monomodal (verbal) text to multimodal, multimedial texts’, from ‘narrator to narrator-presenter’, from ‘reading to the transmodal construction of narrative meaning’, and from ‘reader to user’ (Gibbons 2015).

Law develops the idea of creativity as “a cognitive, psychological and philosophical force which powers various multimodal forms of the arts such as visual arts, performing arts, media arts and literary arts” (Law 2020: 37). The author proposes a new analytical framework for creativity in multimodal texts (AFCMT). Using the concepts of ‘the explicit’ (the known) and ‘the implicit’ (the assumed) and elaborating the notions of “endo-referenced creativity” and “exo-referenced creativity”, Law explores various forms of multimodality, covering but not limited to, TV drama, movie, sitcom, sign language, digital arts, song and dance in MTV.

Thurlow explores the creativity phenomenon from the point of view of the playful use of language and new communication technology by young people. He claims that the language play and verbal art of new media communicators is certainly no less creative, no less imaginative than other verbal art. However, unlike other orthodox or authorized modes of creativity, the language of new media is an expression of “vernacular creativity”; a form of what P. Willis calls “grounded aesthetics” characterized by playful, pleasurable use of language in its interaction with other semiotic signs. The analysis of new media discourse (e.g. (instant) messaging in online chatrooms, social networking sites, private blogs, etc.) let Thurlow systematize various means of the so-called “vernacular creativity”. The scholar discusses the cases of different non-standard or innovative orthographic, lexical, stylistic, and syntactical means combined with various visuals, typographic signs, etc., e.g.: the use of an uncapitalised “i”, “*listend*” for *listened*, letter-number homophones and onomatopoeia (“knowwww”), reduplicated punctuation (“!?!?!?!?”), the use of colour and photos, code play with dingbats and webdings. As a whole, Thurlow’s research of young people’s new media discourse results in refining the assumption that “discursive creativity in the new media is often poetic, ususally playful and always pragmatic” (Thurlow 2012: 170).

Thus, interdisciplinary research carried out today opens up new insights into the character of linguistic creativity in multimodal discourses and makes significant contribution to defining its new types and forms of manifestation. Following this tendency of studying creative aspects of language and speech in the domain of multimodal communication, this paper explores linguistic creativity in cinematic discourse. It pursues the following interrelated purposes: to identify and systematize the verbal units that provide the creation of multimodal tropes in films; and to define the ways verbal units are modified in the process of constructing multimodal multidimensional images in cinematic discourse.

2. Theoretical underpinnings and basic notions

The interdisciplinarity of my research consists in its reliance on a number of theories and concepts developed in different areas of linguistics, film studies, and multimodality. These are the theories of linguistic creativity (e.g., Carter 2004, Langlotz 2006, Iriskhanova 2009, Feshchenko 2012, Zykova 2015, Kiose 2021); multimodal figurativeness and multimodal (cinematic) imagery (e.g., Deleuze 1986, Carroll 1996, Forceville & Urios-Aparisi 2009, Cienki 2018, Müller &

Kappelhoff 2018); cinepoetics and linguistic poetics (e.g., Bordwell 2007, *Cinema Poetics* 2016, Gorshkova 2016); and of figurative thinking and figurative language (e.g., Teliya 1988, Gibbs (ed.) 2008, Musolff 2019, Sun, Kalinin & Ignatenko 2021). The key notions developed in my work are “linguistic creativity” and “cinematic trope”. To signify the verbal units that play the basic role in the process of generating cinematic tropes and are, in essence, targets of multimodal conceptualization and cinematic staging, I use the term “target verbal units”.

Traditionally, linguistic creativity is understood as a production of novel or original verbal units or forms that render new meanings or new aspects of meaning. Whatever they are, linguistic innovations serve to adjust the vocabulary to constructing discourse of a particular kind (e.g. poetic, advertising, political) with a particular pragmatic purpose (e.g. manipulation, aesthetic impact, ideology promotion, goods sale). However, the emergence of new types of communication provided by high technologies and changes in the discourse landscape of modern society lead to the development of a new outlook on the essence of linguistic creativity. As Jones notices, “the ways in which we see creativity are constantly being reshaped, sometimes rapidly and sometimes more imperceptibly, by new cultural, societal, and technological forces, and this is even more the case in an age of ever-more-ubiquitous digital media practices” (Jones 2015a: xi). Due to these factors, linguistic creativity overcomes the borders of purely linguistic sphere and can be associated with the production of unique or innovative multimodal phenomena, such as, for instance, multimodal figurativeness. [see also (D’Angelo & Cantoni 2006, Carroll 1996)]. In this paper, I set out to elaborate the approach to linguistic creativity as a trigger or a source of cinematic figurativeness that underlies the formation of a cinematic trope – a basic building element of film poetics.

The existing definitions of a cinematic trope are based on foregrounding its particular aspects or functions. For instance, in Monaco’s opinion, a cinematic trope is one of the main elements of the lexicon of film semiology that allows one to view “the map of film semiology” dynamically, as actions rather than facts. The scholar makes a distinction between the tropes (metaphor, metonymy, and synecdoche) that are created in other arts and reproduced in films and the tropes that “a film has made its own” (Monaco 1981: 140). In his turn, Prokhorov claims that cinematic tropes form operational systems to produce cultural senses and values for supporting the existing in this or that society model of economical production (Prokhorov 2007: 40). Evgrafova regards a cinematic trope as a result of the semiotic interpolation between verbal and nonverbal units, which provides the formation of metaphorical and metonymic associations. In her point of view, a trope is a logical turn that lets the units of “onscreen speech” establish new relationships to each other, which are based on the operations of condensation or displacement of meaning (Evgrafova 2020: 352). In my research, a cinematic trope is defined as a multidimensional dynamic artistic-aesthetic unity having figurative or indirect meaning emerged

through the creative interaction of various verbal and nonverbal means in the process of constructing the fictional reality of a film (Zykova 2020).

In contemporary studies, cinematic tropes are classified in accordance with different criteria. I apply two classifications of cinematic tropes. Taking into account principles and ways of their formation, cinematic tropes are divided into cinematic metaphors, cinematic metonymies, cinematic litotes, cinematic hyperboles, cinematic ironies, cinematic oxymorons, etc. (Forceville 2016). Considering their relatedness to a verbal component as their basis, cinematic tropes can be of two principal types: nonverbal and verbal or verbally based (Caroll 1996). In the present work, my focus is on the exploration of verbally based cinematic tropes, in particular, on cinematic metaphor, cinematic metonymy, and cinematic irony.

3. Sources of research material and methodology

To analyze the creative potential of verbal means in constructing cinematic figurativeness I have selected eight films with the overall running time of 670 minutes (11h 10 min). They are comedies of outstanding Soviet film directors, which were released in the 1960s:

- “Polosatyy reys” / “A Striped Trip” (directed by Vladimir Fetin 1961),
- “Sem' nyanek” / “Seven Nannies” (directed by Rolan Bykov 1962),
- “Tri plyus dva” / “Three Plus Two” (directed by Genrikh Oganessian 1963),
- “Ya shagayu po Moskve” / “I Walk the Streets of Moscow” (directed by Georgiy Daneliya 1963),
- “Dobro pozhalovat', ili Postoronnim vkhod vospreshchen!” / “Welcome, or No Trespassing!” (directed by Elem Klimov 1964),
- “Dayte zhalobnuyu knigu!” / “Give me a Book of Complaints!” (directed by Eldar Ryazanov 1965),
- “Operatsiya Y i drugie priklyucheniya Shurika” / “Operation Y and Shurik’s Other Adventures” (directed by Leonid Gaidai 1965),
- “Brilliantovaya ruka” / “The Diamond Arm” (directed by Leonid Gaidai 1968).

An important motivation for choosing these films as sources of research material are as follows. Firstly, the 1960s marked an important milestone in the Soviet-Russian history that exerted a significant impact on the development of the Russian culture and art, and film art in particular. Secondly, the reform in the film industry of the 1960s gave a substantial impetus to the renewal of comedy genre. Thirdly, new perspectives of developing comedy film industry in the 1960s resulted in the revision of the language role in constructing cinematic figurativeness. The selected cinematic material encompasses all the sub-genres of the comedy film that emerged and/or were developed in the 1960s and served as an experimentation platform for re-thinking the word significance in cinepoetics. It includes romantic,

social, adventure, criminal, screwball (eccentric), slapstick comedy films that had a massive appeal to the audience upon their release.

The methodology offered in my research involves several analytical stages based on the application of particular research strategies and tools. These stages are as follows: (I) recognizing and systematizing verbally based cinematic tropes in the comedy films under study; (II) identifying and categorizing verbal units that trigger their creation; (III) establishing kinds of transformations that verbal units have in the process of their translation into multimodal forms to construct cinematic tropes.

As far as the first stage is concerned, in modern film literature the issue of cinematic tropes' recognizability is quite challenging and can be viewed from various perspectives [see, for instance, (Baldry 2004, Eggertsson & Forceville 2009, Ladewig & Müller 2013)]. Offered methods are adopted to certain research tasks and are appropriate for exploring multimodal (cinematic) tropes on the basis of particular material. Thus Ladewig and Müller's research of two dance workshops on balance and posture is centered on the interplay of metaphor, embodiment, and gestures. The scholars make distinction between waking and sleeping metaphors (verbal and multimodal) and, in the work under consideration, concentrated uniquely on the identification and analysis of activated 'waking' metaphors. For documenting activated metaphoricity in two modalities (speech and gesture), a timeline annotation in Keynote was applied. In this kind of annotation, "metaphoric expressions are shown as boxes on a timeline and the size of these boxes corresponds roughly to the length of a verbal, gestural, or verbo-gestural metaphoric expression as identified in the ELAN-Software" (Ladewig & Müller 2013: 305). The major advantage of this approach derives from the possibility to identify metaphors, visualize their dynamics, length and types of cooperation between metaphoric verbal expressions and gestures. Some of the parameters of recognizing and studying multimodal tropes used in this work as well as in other individual and co-authored investigations carried out by these scholars [e.g. (Müller & Kappelhoff 2018, Greifenstein et al. 2020)] were taken into account in my research to elaborate the recognition procedure of verbally based cinematic tropes.

Due to the special focus of my exploration, the linguistic form-based method is applied. It involves four methodological steps:

1) Microsoft Excel annotation of oral and written speech in a film according to the following aspects: (a) "the ordinal number of a discourse unit making up the verbal structure of a film", (b) "film character (personage)", (c) "a discourse unit";

2) identification of a verbal element (if any) that gives rise to a cinematic trope;

3) (d) specifying a type of a cinematic trope (cinematic metaphor, cinematic metonymy, or cinematic irony);

4) Microsoft Excel annotation of cinematic tropes according to the following parameters: (e) "soundtrack or other sound elements"; (f) "kinesthetic elements" (gestures, body movements, posture, etc.); (g) "visual elements and devices" (misen-en-scène, camera position and moves, montage, shot transitions, shooting

angle, light values, etc.); (h) “time of unfolding” (the beginning and end of a cinematic trope in the temporal structure of a film); (i) “length”.

A verbal unit that underlies a cinematic trope can be represented in a film in oral and/or written form, or be identified only with the help of some explicitly or implicitly expressed associations that can be inferred from the film storytelling or film plot. Proceeding from this, the annotation reveals three possible variants of documenting verbal units’ involvement in creating cinematic figurativeness: verbal units used in the film do not give rise to cinematic tropes (variant 1); verbal units used in the film generate cinematic tropes (variant 2); verbal units underlie the creation of cinematic tropes, but they are not used in the film and are implicitly inferred (variant 3). Figures 1, 2 and 3 present these variants. In Figure 2, a verbal unit triggering the emergence of a cinematic metaphor is capitalized and marked in red colour.

№	FILM CHARACTER	A DISCOURSE UNIT	CINEMATIC TROPE	SOUNDTRACK	KINESTHETIC ELEMENTS	VISUAL ELEMENTS & DEVICES	TIME	LENGTH
23	Агент	А, наконец-то!	нет					
24	Шулейкин	Здравствуйте.	нет					
25	Агент	Здравствуйте.	нет					
26	Шулейкин	Шулейкин.	нет					
27		Очень приятно!	нет					
28	Агент	Очень приятно!	нет					
29		Ну, скоро будете на родине, товарищ Шулейкин.	нет					
30	Шулейкин	Вы знаете, я... я Одессу во сне вижу.	нет					
31	Агент	А, Одесса... Одесса!	нет					
32	Шулейкин	Одесса!	нет					
33	Агент	Груз примите прямо на палубе.	нет					

Fig. 1. Variant of annotation 1: Extract of the Microsoft Excel annotation of the film “Polosatyy reys”

№	FILM CHARACTER	A DISCOURSE UNIT	CINEMATIC TROPE	SOUNDTRACK	KINESTHETIC ELEMENTS	VISUAL ELEMENTS & DEVICES	TIME	LENGTH
38	Костя Иночкин	[голос за кадром] А это – наш НАЧАЛЬНИК лагеря.	кинометафора власти (высокого социального положения)	закадровая музыка (ритмичная, легкая, веселая)	положение стоя; ноги на ширине плеч; руки в замке перед собой	сверхдальний план; нижний угол съемки; естественное освещение; наклон камеры влево; статичное положение камеры	00:04:00 / 00:04:05	5 сек.
39		[голос за кадром] Товарищ Дынин.						




Fig. 2. Variant of annotation 2: Extract of the Microsoft Excel annotation of the film “Dobro pozhalovat', ili Postoronnim vkhod vospreshchen!”

At the second stage, the structural-semantic analysis of verbal units underlying the cinematic tropes is carried out. This analysis intends to determine the categories which these verbal units belong to (i.e. words (nouns, verbs, adjectives), word-combinations, idioms, etc.). The resulting categorization helps to reveal the dependency of cinematic figurativeness on the structural and semantic properties of the target verbal unit.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	№	FILM CHARACTER	A DISCOURSE UNIT	CINEMATIC TROPE	SOUNDTRACK	KINESTHETIC ELEMENTS	VISUAL ELEMENTS & DEVICES	TIME	LENGTH
1	314	Павел		КИНОМЕТОНИМИЯ любви с первого взгляда	медленная, романтическая музыка	смотрит пристально на Аллу, улыбается	смена (сверх)крупных планов лица, искусственное освещение	00:17:40 - 00:17:50	10 сек.
2		Алла				смотрит пристально на Павла, улыбается в ответ			
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									
16									
17									

Fig. 3. Variant of annotation 3: Extract of the Microsoft Excel annotation of the film “Sem' nyanek”

As transposing a verbal unit into a new – multimodal – form inevitably leads to its transformations, the third stage focuses on the extent and kind of these transformations. Target verbal units are analyzed in accordance with the following aspects: a) structural changes; b) grammatical changes; c) semantic changes; and e) pragmatic changes. This stage of the research helps to evaluate how the process of cinematic tropes’ creation can modify the verbal units that underlie it.

In general, the applied methodology has been elaborated in order to take into account two interrelated aspects of realizing linguistic creativity in the cinematic discourse. On the one hand, a verbal unit triggers the process of creating a multimodal innovation – a cinematic trope, and, on the other hand, the verbal unit itself undergoes certain changes.

4. Research results

In all the eight films under consideration, three kinds of cinematic tropes emerge on the basis of verbal units: cinematic metonymies, cinematic metaphors, and cinematic ironies. However, to establish the exact quantity of cinematic tropes in each studied film proved to be quite a challenging task due to a number of factors. To demonstrate these factors, I will consider two examples in detail.

In the comedy film “Tri plyus dva”, the cinematic metaphor of “taming a bachelor-misogyny” emerges in the scene when Zoya attempts to talk with Stepan Sundukov wanting to persuade him to leave their campsite on the beach. As Zoya works as a lion trainer in the circus, she uses her professional experience during the conversation with Stepan treating him as if “he were a lion to be tamed”:

(1a) Spetan: *Slushayte, kogda ya na otdykhe, ya na temy, svyazannye s moey professiey i biografiey ne razgovarivayu. Dazhe s militsiey. – Listen, when I’m on vacation, I don’t talk about my profession and biography. Even with the police.*

(Zoy): *A-a-a! – Ah-ah-ah!* (The interjection is synchronized with Zoya’s gesture signifying a certain training exercise with “a lion”) <...> (see Fig. 4)



Fig. 4. The cinematic metaphor of “taming a bachelor-misogyny”

- (1b) Zoya: *Dlya vashego zdorov'ya karlovarskaya voda byla by nezamenima.*
– *The Karlovy Vary water would do you much good.*
Stepan: *A mne morskaya voda bol'she nraivitsya.* – *Sea water is quite OK with me.*
Zoya: *Da?* – *Really?*
Stepan: *Da.* – *Yes.*
Zoya: *Ap! – Up!* (The interjection-command is co-occurred with Zoya's gesture implying a particular training exercise with “a lion”) (see Fig. 5)
Stepan: *Chto «ap»? Chto vy vse vremya apaete?* – *What's “Up”? Why are you constantly saying “Up”?*
Zoya: *O, net, net. Nichego, nichego.* – *Oh, no, no. Nothing, nothing.*



Fig. 5. The cinematic metaphor of “taming a bachelor-misogyny”

As the metaphoric conceptualization of unfriendly relations between the two main characters (Zoya and Stepan) occurs twice in this scene of the film, the cases of its occurrence can be qualified differently: either as one complex cinematic metaphor with two bases (61 seconds long), or as two separate (synonymic) cinematic metaphors (13 seconds and 11 seconds long, respectively).

As another example, in the comedy film “Sem' nyanek” the pronunciation of the phrase *Nachinaem urok utrenney gimnastiki* gives rise to the process of metaphorical interpretation of the city (Moscow) as a person doing exercises early in the morning. In the film episode in question, there are fifteen verbal units of various structural-semantic types (*prigotovit'sya*, *prognut'sya*, *vdokh*, *vydokh*,

postavit' nogi na shirinu plech, etc) that are used for constructing a metaphoric image of Moscow's awakening that starts with morning exercises, e.g.:

- (2) Coach (voice over, radio broadcasting): ***Vstali!*** – ***Stand up!*** (The use of the verb is accompanied by the image of cars standing in a parking place) (see Fig. 6).



Fig. 6. The multimodal metaphoric representation based on the word *vstali*

- (3) Coach (voice over, radio broadcasting): ***Razvodya ruki v storonu, glubokiy vdokh.*** – ***Arms out to the side and deep inhalation.*** (The use of the phrase is followed by the image of several cranes turning their moving booms in opposite directions) (see Fig. 7)



Fig. 7. The multimodal metaphoric representation based on the word-combination *razvodya ruki v storonu*

The peculiarities of unfolding the metaphoric multimodal representation of the city make it possible to suggest two approaches to its identification. It can be viewed as one cinematic metaphor of “the city’s morning awaking” that consists of a number of interrelated metaphorical constituents, or it can be defined as a complex of separate cinematic metaphors (e.g., the cinematic metaphor of “cars as people”, the cinematic metaphor of “cranes doing exercises”). Besides, the multiple metaphorical transfers are complicated by such metonymical projections of both specified and abstract character as ‘city for its residents’, ‘city objects for city’,

‘content (objects) for container’, ‘object for its owner/producer’, ‘whole for part’, and ‘part for whole’. Moreover, they convey the idea of how the inhabitants of the city start their working day in a rather ironic way. The latter implies the involvement of the cinematic irony. The borderlines between all these means of figurative conceptualization are movable and cannot be unequivocally defined.

Also, there are cases when one verbal unit (in its original or modified forms) underlies a number of multimodal metonymical or metaphorical representations that occur twice or more times throughout the whole film duration and can be regarded either as separate cinematic metaphors and metonymies, or as one macro cinematic trope. Besides, a particular approach is required in identifying cinematic metaphors and metonymies in the part introducing film titles. The introduction of film titles usually involves a whole complex of overlapped or intertwined metaphorical and metonymic projections. All these cases have been already highlighted in a number of my previous publications (see, e.g. (Zykova 2021, Zykova 2022)).

Thus, identifying the exact quantity of cinematic tropes is directly linked with the problem of syncretism of cinematic images as very intricate heterosemiotic dynamic formations and the problem of their typology. As these problems need special thorough exploration, which the present paper did not aim to conduct, I can make conclusions based on my only general observations. The analysis has shown that the films under study differ both in frequency and types of verbally based cinematic tropes. For instance, in the comedy film “Ya shagayu po Moskve” cinematic metonymies occur much more frequently than cinematic metaphors and cinematic ironies. In contrast, the comedy films “Tri plyus dva” and “Sem' nyanek” are characterized by a great number of cinematic tropes among which cinematic metaphors form the majority of cases. Cinematic irony is seldom used as a separate cinematic trope in all the eight films under consideration. It is mostly integrated into the structure of cinematic metaphors or cinematic metonymies. In all the eight comedies, verbally based cinematic metaphors and cinematic metonymies can have both more complex and more simple inner construction.

4.1. Categorizing verbal units involved in cinematic tropes’ creation

As my research has revealed, a cinematic trope can derive from one or several interlinked verbal units and can have a complex verbal structure. Most typical of all the studied comedy films are the cases when only one verbal unit plays a key role in the construal of a cinematic trope, and this verbal unit has an oral form of expression (i.e. it is usually pronounced in the film by one of the characters).

Two kinds of verbal means are used to construct the cinematic tropes in the Soviet comedy films of the 1960s: non-figurative and figurative. Non-figurative means underlying cinematic figurativeness are represented by such categories of verbal units as interjections, words (nouns and verbs), free word combinations, and sentences. To demonstrate the ways of their involvement into the construction of different cinematic tropes, I will consider two examples.

In the comedy film “Ya shagayu po Moskve”, the word *shagat’* (*walk*) becomes one of the targets of cinematic staging. *Shagat’* is a verb that means ‘to move forwards by putting one foot in front of the other’ [MD]. This verb is used in the title and underlies the main cinematic metonymy of street walking as part of the city travelling in the given comedy. Remarkably, this cinematic metonymy emerges many times in the film and has various modulations, cf.:

- (4a) “Ya *shagayu* po Moskve” – “I *walk* the Streets of Moscow” (The cinematic metonymy based on the verb *shagat’* see Fig. 8).



Fig. 8. A modulation of the cinematic metonymy of travelling across Moscow

- (4b) “Ya *shagayu* po Moskve” – “I *walk* the Streets of Moscow” (The cinematic metonymy based on the verb *shagat’* see Fig. 9).



Fig. 9. A modulation of the cinematic metonymy of travelling across Moscow

Both modulations of the cinematic metonymy presented in Figures 8 and 9 unfold in accordance with one and the same principle. The long shot of pedestrians walking along a central street of Moscow (Fig. 8, image 1) and the long shot of a young woman walking along another central Moscow street in the rain (Fig. 9, image 3) are alternated with the close-up shot of the pedestrians' feet (Fig. 8, image 2) and the close-up shot of the young woman's feet (Fig. 9, image 4), correspondingly. The people's feet metonymically stand for moving in one or opposite directions with a variety of possible purposes that a person may have in Moscow, i.e. to get at work or get home, to do the shopping, to meet with friends, to go sightseeing, to go on a date, and, at last, just to enjoy the walk itself. The creation of this cinematic metonymy aims to depict street walking as peculiar experience of conceiving a unique rhythm of urban life in such a megalopolis as Moscow as well as the relationships between its residents and city guests.

Another example of exploiting non-figurative verbal means to construct cinematic tropes is taken from the film "Sem' nyanek". In one of its episodes, the word-combination *poluchat' pasport* (to get a passport) gives rise to a cinematic irony:

- (5) Lena: *Ved' segodnja osobennyj den'. Chelovek poluchaet pasport!* – Today is a very special day. A man is **getting a passport!** (The pronunciation of these sentences is followed by a series of consecutive close-ups depicting this important event in the life of the teenager Afanasij in a rather humorous way: Afanasij is putting his white shirt on, he is being photographed, his photograph is pasted into his passport, Afanasij has got his passport (see Fig. 10)).

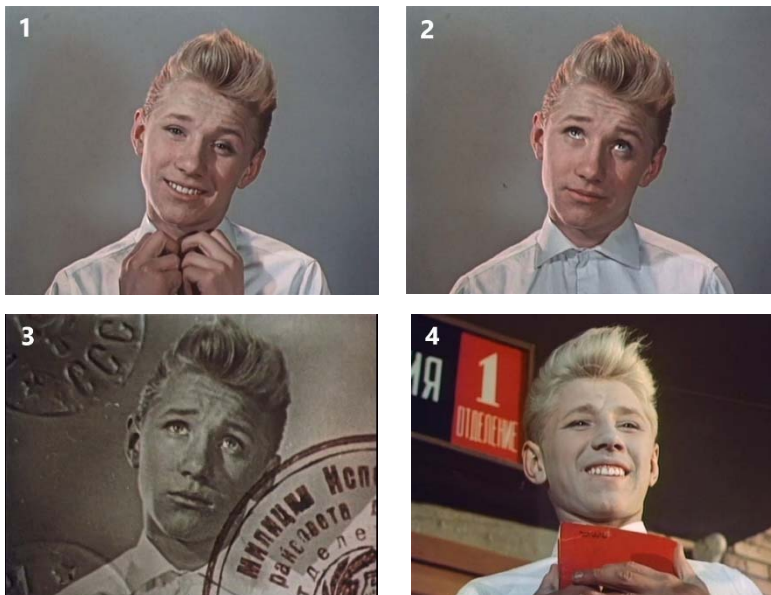


Fig. 10. The cinematic irony based on the word-combination *poluchat' pasport*

The ironic implications are most evident in the monochrome close-up shot of the passport photograph (image 3). The protagonist's face expression on the photograph can be regarded as a kind of "deviation" from what one usually expects to see in such an official document as a passport. This deviation from common practice conveys the idea of the teenager's peculiar personality, which is revealed to the film-viewer at the beginning of the comedy. Afanasij is an inmate of a children's correctional colony, and to get a passport means for him new or extra opportunities to commit a crime. And that is what he did immediately after receiving the document.

The figurative verbal means identified in the films under consideration as targets of cinematic staging can be categorized as idioms, famous literary tropes, and proverbs. For example, the cinematic metaphor of "concealing facts" from the comedy film "Tri plus dva" stems from the following phraseological unit:

- (6) *zametat' sledy* (lit. *to cover one's tracks*) – 'to hide or destroy evidence of something, usually of one's involvement in something reprehensible' (The cinematic metaphor based on this phraseological unit unfolds in a series of dynamic images (see two of them in Fig. 11)).



Fig. 11. The cinematic metaphor based on the phraseological unit *zametat' sledy*

According to the film storyline, Zoya and Natasha decide to test the true feelings of Vadim and Roman who seemed to be in love with them. One morning, the women unexpectedly and secretly leave the campsite, destroying all the evidence, which could help the young men guess their destination. In the alternating long and medium shots (Fig. 11), their 'running away' is metaphorically exposed through the cinematic staging of the phraseological unit *zametat' sledy*. Zoya and Natasha attach pine branches to the rear bumper of the car that sweep up their car's tracks and leave the young men no chance to know in which direction they have gone. Though this phraseological unit is not pronounced in the film, it is easily

decoded by the film viewer as a conceptual nucleus of the cinematic metaphor unfolding on the screen.

It is also interesting to consider the cases of transposing figurative units that occur in songs into the audio-visual forms of the films under consideration. One of the examples is the song in the film “Dayte zhalobnuyu knigu!”. The figurative expressions used in the song generate the interrelated cinematic tropes depicting the specifics of a newspaper reporter’s work in a rather romantic way, cf.:

- (7) *My shagali po peskam pustyni – We walked across the sands of a desert*
(The poetic image conveyed by this expression is displayed by means of corresponding audio-visual and kinesthetic elements that form a cinematic metonymy (see Fig. 12)).



Fig. 12. The cinematic metonymy based on the figurative utterance from the song

- (8) *My vstrechalis' s oblakami na El'bruse – We met with the clouds on Elbrus*
(This poetic line is synchronized with corresponding audio-visual elements that generate a cinematic metaphor (see Fig. 13)).



Fig. 13. The cinematic metaphor based on the figurative utterance from the song

The study of cinematic tropes has shown that both non-figurative and figurative means underlying them undergo various transformations, which will be described in the next section of this paper.

4.2. Transformations of verbal units caused by cinematic tropes' creation

Owing to the cinematic means and devices that are involved in creating cinematic tropes, both non-figurative and figurative verbal units that construe them acquire more specified interpretations, and thus – new (unique) structural, grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic characteristics or qualities. These cinematic means and devices are as follows: visuals (shot transitions, shooting angle, light, contrast and colour distribution, etc.), sound design (music, sounds and noises, acoustic effects, etc.), and kinesthetic sequence (actors' movement and position in space, their gestures, body movements, facial expressions, etc.).

For instance, in the comedy film “Operatsiya Y i drugie priklyucheniya Shurika” the non-figurative word-combination *brat' ekzamenatsionnyy bilet* (lit. *take an examination card*) gives rise to a cinematic metaphor based on understanding an examination in terms of gambling, i.e. a card game – ‘an activity in which you risk money in the hope of winning more money if you are lucky or if you guess something correctly’:

(9) Examiner: **Berite bilet!** – **Take an examination card!**

Student: *Professor, mozhno eshche [bilet]?* – *Professor, can I have another one?*

Examiner: *Pozhaluysta.* – *Yes. Please.*

Student: **Eshche [bilet]!** – **Another [card]!**

Examiner: **Beri [bilet]!** – **Take it!**

Student: **Sebe [bilet]!** – **Now, it's your turn [to take a card]!**

Examiner: *Chto znachit «sebe»?* – *What do you mean by “your turn”?*

Student: *Oy, prostite, professor.* – *Oh, excuse me, Professor.* (see Fig. 14).



Fig. 14. The cinematic metaphor of taking an exam as gambling

The cinematic metaphor formation results in the actualization of two senses of *bilet*, one of which is prescriptive and the other is new (occasional): ‘thick, stiff

paper; a piece of this for writing on’ vs. ‘any one of a set of 52 cards with numbers and pictures printed on one side, which are used to play various card games’), thus creating an entirely different (imaginative) interpretation of the situation. The form of the word-combination is both fully and partially reduced throughout the dialogue and its original components *ekzamenatsionnyy билет* are (implicitly) replaced within the framework of this communicative situation by the new ones – *igral'naya karta*. This denotes such structural changes as: *brat' ekzamenatsionnyy билет > brat' igral'nyu kartu*. The “cues” that help to decode all these transformations are the words *eshche* and *sebe* that are usually used in a card game. All the indicated transformations allow the verbal unit in question to perform a pragmatic function not typical for its everyday use – a ludic function.

Semantic changes of target verbal units are most significant. The research findings have established two main directions of semantic transformations: 1) from figurative meaning to the elaboration of non-figurative senses; 2) from a more general or a more specified non-figurative meaning to the development of occasional (unconventional) or new (original) figurative senses.

Both directions of semantic transformations can be illustrated with the help of an episode from the comedy film “Operatsiya Y i drugie priklucheniya Shurika”. In this episode, two main protagonists – Shurik (a student working part-time at a construction site) and Fedya (a boor who is sentenced to fifteen days of community service) – get involved in a chase across the construction site using building equipment and various materials as weapons. Fedya is trying to catch up and punish Shurik whom he blames for his administrative arrest. During this chase, Shurik jumps out of a window of a building under construction and gets caught in the bitumen spilled accidentally on the ground. Estimating the situation, Fedya pronounces the phrase:

- (10) Fedya: *A, vlip, ochkarik? – Aha, you're in trouble, four-eyes?*
(see Fig. 15).



Fig. 15. The cinematic metaphor based on the verb *vlipnut'*

The verb *vlipnut'* (~ *to get stuck*) means ‘to get in trouble’. The root morpheme of this verb *-lip-* has stable associations with the idea of something sticky, adhesive

(cf.: *lipkiy, lipnut', prilipat'*). In the film, this idea is embodied (or visualized) in the cinematic image of Shurik who is standing still as his boots are literally stuck to the ground. The verb *vlipnut'* pronounced by the protagonist Fedya together with its visual representation gives rise to the cinematic metaphor of finding oneself in unfavorable and dangerous circumstances. As a result of this cinematic metaphor's creation, the verb *vlipnut'* (~ *to get stuck*) acquires new non-figurative senses – 'be incapable of moving or going as one's boots are stuck to the ground because of spilled bitumen'.

Besides, in the given episode, the formation of another cinematic metaphor causes the emergence of occasional figurative senses in the word *avans* (*an advance*):

(11) Fedya: *Eto tol'ko avans* – *It's only an advance* (see Fig. 16).



Fig. 16. The cinematic metaphor based on the noun *avans*

The term *avans* refers to the financial sphere and means 'money paid for work before it has been done or money paid earlier than expected'. In the film, taking advantage of the situation, Fedya is kicking Shurik with his foot and calling the kick an advance. Fedya's action and his own interpretation of this action represent a single visual-kinetic-verbal complex. It figuratively expresses the idea of Fedya's plotted revenge that underlies the corresponding cinematic metaphor. This cinematic trope also unfolds with the help of other expressive figurative (metaphorical, euphemistic) utterances following the sentence with the word *avans*:

(12) Fedya: *Nu teper' vse! Nu, student, gotov'sya. Skoro na tebya nadenut derevyannyy makintosh, i v tvoem dome budet igrat' muzyka... No ty ee ne uslyshish'* – *Well, that's it! Well, student, get ready. Soon you will be wearing a wooden mackintosh and music will be playing in your house... But you won't hear it.*

Thus, the term *avans* changes its meaning within the framework of the cinematic metaphor of revenge. It obtains the occasional senses of 'the act of aggression done by a perpetrator in relation to another person before he will take

revenge on the latter for his arrest to a full extent'. The new meaning endows the word *avans* with a new pragmatic role – to produce a humorous effect, to provoke laughter on the part of the film viewer.

According to the research findings, a verbal unit can be also involved into the creation of a particular kind of cinematic tropes that can be qualified as 'extended' due to their enlarged structure and longer time of unfolding in a film. In such cinematic tropes, the target verbal unit can be transformed by both non-verbal signs and other verbal units. For example, in the comedy "Dobro pozhalovat', ili Postoronnim vkhod vospreshchen!", the idiom *portit' krov' komu-libo* (lit. *to spoil someone's blood* – 'to greatly annoy someone') underlies an extended cinematic metaphor with the length of 124 seconds. It is created in the film to convey hostile relationships between two protagonists: comrade Dynin, the pioneer camp director, and Kostya Inochkin, a pioneer of the third squad:

- (13) Pioneer leader: *Chto ty ob etom khuligane pechalish'sya? Vot uvidish', tebe bez Inochkina legche stanet. Esli by ty znala, skol'ko on tovarishchu Dyninu krovi poportil.* – *Why are you worrying about this bully? You'll see, it will be easier for you without Inochkin. If you only knew how much harm he had done to comrade Dynin* (lit. 'how much **he had spoiled** comrade Dynin's **blood**) (These utterances are followed by a series of shots in which the meaning of the idiom is represented and extended by a complex of interrelated auidial, visual, and kinesthetic elements) (see two of them in Fig. 17)



Fig. 17. The extended cinematic metaphor based on the idiom *portit' krov' komu-libo*

The main character Kostya Inochkin violates all the rules established by comrade Dynin in the pioneer camp. Therefore, the extended cinematic metaphor serves to render two main ideas: the idea that Kostya's disobedience gives Dynin a lot of trouble and, hence, harms his health provoking the doctor's considerable alarm (Fig. 17, image 1) and, in contrast, the idea that it is only Kostya who may help Dynin get rid of the "given trouble" (Fig. 17, image 2). Being full of naïve heroism, Kostya imagines that he offers his own blood for transfusion to save the camp director's life. Throughout the unfolding of the cinematic metaphor in question, the basic form and meaning of the idiom *portit' krov' komu-libo* are subjected to particular structural, grammatical, and semantic modifications, cf.:

(14) Kostya: *Nu da, esli b ya emu khot' kaplyu krovi isportil, tut by takoe nachalos'*. – *Yeah, if I had spoiled even a drop of his blood, what would have started here.*

Doctor-woman: *U tovarishcha Dynina vsya krov' isporchena! Karaul! Karaul!* – *Comrade Dynin has all the blood spoiled! Alarm! Alarm!* (see Fig. 17, image 1)

In the film, significant semantic transformations of the idiom *portit' krov' komu-libo* result from the play with its meaning. This play is implemented through the structural-semantic correlations that are established between this idiom and two other verbal units: the idiom *zaklyatyy vrag* (lit. *sworn enemy*) used in the comedy in the modified form *krovnyy vrag* (lit. *a blood enemy*) and the term *krovnyy brat* (lit. *a blood brother*). Also remarkably, these two verbal units form an antithesis and can be regarded as occasional antonyms intensifying expressivity of the cinematic image, cf.:

(15) Dynin: *Inochkin. Inochkin! Ty byl dlya menya krovnyy vragom. A seychas stal krovnyy bratom!*. – *Inochkin. Inochkin! You were my blood enemy. But now you've become a blood brother!* (see Fig. 17, image 2)

Besides, the idiom *portit' krov' komu-libo* also interplays on the semantic level with a number of medical terms with the component *krov'*, which are used in the same episode. Some of them are modified or invented in the film, cf.: *perelivanie krovi* (*blood transfusion*), *gruppa krovi* (*blood group*), *redkaya gruppa krovi* (*rare blood group*), *tridsat' tret'ya gruppa krovi* (*thirty-third blood group*). Owing to all modifications, the idiom *portit' krov' komu-libo* acquires a number of interrelated structural and semantic innovations that serve one pragmatic purpose – to achieve a humorous effect. Overall, the cinematic metaphor based on this idiom presents an original multimodal complex of a high heuristic, pragmatic and aesthetic value.

Thus, the research has shown that non-figurative and figurative verbal units involved in constructing different types of cinematic tropes undergo structural, grammatical, and semantic transformations to a varying extent. Whatever these transformations are, they aim to fulfil the pragmatic task of provoking laughter on the part of the recipient. This pragmatic task is consistent with realizing the main ethical-aesthetic category of the comic, which forms the basis of films of the

comedy genre. The research findings provide us with evidence that, as Crystal states, linguistic creativity stems from humans' desire to play with language, bend and break the rules of language, and make it a source of human pleasure and enjoyment, and fun (Crystal 1998).

5. Discussion

The results obtained show that all the three analyzed types of cinematic tropes are involved in the construal of the imaginative reality of the comedy films under study: cinematic metaphor, cinematic metonymy, and cinematic irony. However, the applied annotation procedure has revealed that in a number of cases the borders between different forms and kinds of cinematic figurativeness are rather blurred, and the cinematic tropes tend to merge into one another. This fact makes it difficult to count the exact number of cinematic tropes that are realized in the comedy films in question. There are several factors which are simultaneously at work that might help account for the result obtained. First, the cinematic tropes are characterized by dynamic nature and heterosemioticity. Second, cinematic tropes clustering is rooted in the fact that figurative conceptualization is basically syncretic and might have peculiar ways of its manifestation in such a special kind of multimodal discourse as cinematic discourse. And finally, there is no common, i.e. universally accepted approach to the typology of multimodal or cinematic tropes (multimodal/cinematic metaphors, multimodal/cinematic metonymies, etc.), especially bearing in mind their inner structure that can involve various and multiple figurative transfers. The validity of these factors stated in my investigation is confirmed by the results and conclusions of the studies carried out earlier with regard to films and other multimodal discourses. So, investigating TV news features, Müller and Kappelhoff foreground the dynamic property as one of the key distinguishing features of cinematic metaphors described as movement-images that are made of such elements as acting, gesturing, and speaking (Müller & Kappelhoff 2018). Though the scholars speak of a complexity of cinematic metaphors and show the ways of how seemingly single multimodal and monomodal metaphors can be integrated in the construal of one cinematic metaphor, they do not address more specifically the question of their typology according to this complexity criterion. Further on, the syncretism of figurative conceptualization is inferred from the observations of multimodal metaphor and metonymy interaction made by Urios-Aparisi. The research on several TV commercials let the scholar establish that interactions of cinematic metaphor and metonymy follow clear cognitive patterns which restrict and define their design. According to his findings, metonymy represents the target for the metaphor in a way that can be realistic for the metaphorical representation, and motivate the message of the commercial. Once metonymical correspondences are mapped, the commercial can create additional metaphorical mappings (Urios-Aparisi 2009: 111). The empirical data of my research are in agreement with the works mentioned and provide new information not only to support previous findings but also to get a new insight into the nature of cinematic discourse as a

specific type of multimodal discourse. More empirical data, in my opinion, open up prospects for theoretical advancements in the various issues of multimodal figurativeness and of cinematic (multimodal) tropes typology which has so far defied solution.

As was demonstrated, in the comedy films under study, it is the verbal unit (explicitly expressed or implicitly inferred) that triggers the creation of a cinematic trope, and guides the recipient to its further identification interpretation. This result is in contrast with the investigations that show relevant or complete independence of multimodal tropes from language. For instance, the absolute relevance of the verbal has not been proved in dance discourse. Thus Ludewig and Müller examined how and when metaphoric expressions in speech, gesture and body movement are used over the course of the workshop at the dance lesson. They discovered that the multimodal metaphor may occur at first only in the body movement. This fact led them to the conclusion that “metaphors should not be reduced to the level of activating lexical categories or a particular type of lexical processing” (Ludewig & Müller 2013: 318). There is other research to support this point of view. For instance, some modern studies also show that multimodal tropes are not projected patterns of figurativity from language as a semiotic system into a different multimodal system or that the role of the verbal mode can be absent in forming multimodal tropes. Thus Forceville showed that metaphors can be cued in more than one mode simultaneously (Forceville 2004, 2006), which implies that, as Refaie emphasizes, metaphors “operate at the level of thought rather than being merely linguistic” (El Refaie 2009: 175) [see also (Yu 2009, Feng 2017, Gibbs 2020)]. However, I think that the results of the mentioned studies are not incompatible with my findings, as my research suggests that the word-centered character of cinematic tropes stems from the nature of the discourse material: the role of the verbal constituent appears to be more peculiar of comedy genre rather than of cinematic discourse *per se* or of feature films in general. To verify this suggestion, further research on comedy films of other periods and films of other genres is needed.

It is also worth mentioning that the transformations of verbal units underlying cinematic tropes give new insights into the understanding of the nature of linguistic creativity. So far, there have been almost no studies specially focused on modifications of verbal units in the process of constructing multimodal tropes, though it is acknowledged that such studies are theoretically essential to consolidate the validity of linguistic creativity theory. For once the relevance of such explorations was demonstrated by Langlotz. In his analysis of an advertising poster, which stems from a campaign intended to help the homeless in New York City, the scholar singles out several levels of realizing its two verbal elements’ creativity: the central slogan *Eating on the streets isn’t pretty* and the appeal *Help us erase hunger in NYC*. Particularly focusing on the former, Langlotz shows that this novel and unique phrase not only gives rise to a innovative piece of street art but acquires new (non)-figurative senses under the influence of non-verbal signs that constitute this

piece of street art. Resting on the analysis data, Langlotz claims that linguistic creativity should be viewed through the prism of creative interaction of language with other communicative modes, such as gesture or imagery (as in advertising, comics, film, and theatre) (Langlotz 2015). The systematization of verbal units underlying cinematic tropes carried out in my research points to the importance of such an understanding of linguistic creativity. The described cases of detected kinds of transformations (structural, semantic, pragmatic) introduce new data about possible ways of creative use of verbal means as basic constituents of multimodal (cinematic) tropes.

There is another important issue brought about by the results obtained in my research. That is the problem of the role of genre in generating cinematic metaphors. El Refaie claims that genre may have an important influence “on the choice of metaphors by producers, the form these metaphors take, and the ways in which they are recognized and interpreted by audiences” (El Refaie 2009: 175). My investigation of eight comedy films contribute to this new research prospect by establishing the dependence of creating verbally based cinematic tropes on the aesthetic and pragmatic tasks that are peculiar to this genre, i.e. to express the ethic-aesthetic category of the comic and to evoke laughter on the part of the viewer.

6. Conclusions

In the paper, I investigated verbally based cinematic tropes by means of the elaborated methodology of their identification, categorization and analysis using as the case study eight Russian comedy films of the 1960s. The results demonstrated that among a variety of verbal means used to compose the verbal structure of the comedy films under consideration, there are those that serve as conceptual nucleus for generating cinematic figurativeness. The categorization carried out resulted in distinguishing two kinds of units underlying cinematic tropes: 1) non-figurative verbal units, i.e. words, free word-combinations, and sentences; 2) figurative verbal units, i.e. figurative lexis, commonly used literary tropes, phraseological and paremiological units. The verbal units of both categories as triggers of cinematic figurativeness can be explicitly represented (they are pronounced or written) or implicitly inferred (they are implied but not used in the films). It was discovered that as the cinematic tropes unfold in discourse under study, all the target verbal units are transformed in a variety of ways involving structural, grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic transformations. These transformations are indicative of a dual character of linguistic creativity. On the one hand, verbal units trigger the creation of cinematic figurativeness, but, on the other hand, they themselves are liable to changes in the process of cinematic tropes' formation. New (creative) forms and meanings of the target verbal units serve to build up a comic effect. Thus, the results presented give new supporting evidence for the linguistic creativity theory using as a novel “variable” of its development the focus on the ways of how verbal units may be transformed or modified under the influence of constructing cinematic tropes in such special multimodal medium as films.

It should be admitted that the results presented in the paper hold true for a certain time period (the 1960s) and for a certain genre of films (comedy films). Further research involving other periods as well as other genres of cinema (dramas, detectives, thrillers, etc.) would be required to give a better insight into the creative potential of language in constructing cinepoetics. The paper also points to other prospects of further research as it suggests that linguistic creativity could be also explored from other perspectives. It would be interesting to compare verbally based cinematic tropes in films produced in other languages (English, French, German, Italian, etc.) and to study the ways of intersemiotic translation of verbal units from text-sources into their screen adaptations. To conclude, despite the above mentioned limitations, the results of the conducted analysis could serve as a foundation for further studies of creativity phenomenon in the cinematic discourse as well as in other types of multimodal texts, including news, advertising, visual poetry, and electronic literature.

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