ACTUAL PROBLEMS OF RUSSIAN LANGUAGE RESEARCH

АКТУАЛЬНЫЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЙ РУССКОГО ЯЗЫКА

Some aspects of the Russian language democratization in modern media

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Abstract. The article is of an overview and theoretical nature, and its subject is the active processes in the language of modern Russian mass media, caused by the democratization of society, especially in connection with the restructuring of the state and political system that took place in the countries of Eastern Europe in the 1990s. Based on scientific publications, as well as on empirical material (modern journalistic text), the authors systematize socio-cultural processes (within the framework of the general trend towards democratization) that have influenced and continue to influence the language of the media: the social construction of reality and the engagement of the media, the polarization of social groups and formations, the displacement of the transmission model of media functioning by the interaction model, the phenomenon of "echo chambers". In connection with the influence of the socio-political factor, the authors note the most important dynamic processes in the language of the media, such as depatetization of the language clichés of the era of totalitarianism, neosemantization, the growth of vocabulary related to the sphere of consumerism, the activation of means serving the sphere of dialogical relations, overcoming an overly complex nature the language system, etc. It has been shown that the transition to a model of interaction between the media (with political, religious, public organizations, corporations – on the one hand, and the consumer community – on the other hand) caused the social engagement of media discourses, which in its the queue has caused the growth of labeling, evaluative and expressive text elements. Another important trend is associated with the phenomenon of "echo chambers" – its reflexes in the language of the media are the specialization of vocabulary and a decrease in the degree of grammaticalization of messages. The aspects of democratization of the language of the media presented in the article in the future can serve as parameters in accordance with which media monitoring can be carried out, including elements of a linguo-critical nature.

Keywords: Russian language, functional style, substyle, language of the media, journalism, democratisation, colloquialisation, social and functional differentiation of language

Introduction

Mass media language is a part of the nationwide Russian language, and, naturally, all those processes, which occur in other spheres of language activity, are reflected in it, though because of specifics of journalistic discourse various language phenomena are represented in them in a greater or lesser degree. The media sphere itself has a significant impact on the communicative culture of society and language functioning. We can mention several most important forms of such influence: 1) support and development of national languages; 2) dissemination of the literary norm; 3) cultivation of alternative styles, especially colloquial and specialized styles (from the spheres of finance, economics, information technology, healthy lifestyle, etc.); 4) neologization (in some cases defined as barbarization).

The media system as a whole, as well as the language of journalistic discourses, also function in a broader socio-cultural context, under the influence of processes taking place in society at a certain historical stage. This influence is of different nature: on the one hand, it is local, private, occasional, and conjunctural; on the other hand, it is general, and even global. In media studies (in particular, descriptive publications), the concept of "media" is usually treated undifferentiated, without national and cultural attribution of the relevant phenomena in the field of mass communication. One example is I.I. Volkova's dissertation (Volkova, 2015). Its title does not contain any elements indicating the attribution of the material – one would think that the topic of the dissertation is investigated in general theoretical terms. Actually, it is not so. In the author's abstract we read that the research was made on the material of Russian TV-game programs of federal and regional broadcasting of Soviet period (since the end of 1930s) and nowadays, the materials of Russian information portals, Internet publications, communities in social networks of 2010 to 2015. Information on the theme of the game component of media messages, obtained on the Russian material, however, cannot be interpreted unambiguously in general terms – due to the national and cultural specificity of different media systems. For example, the game component is more typical for the speech behaviour of Russians and Ukrainians than for the behaviour of Poles (Leszczak, 2009: 169), which is also reflected in the media reality. Similarly, the information on the Internet is ethnospecific. Thus, if you enter the word *święto* 'holiday' in the Google.pl search engine, the first window will show the windows containing information about Polish state and religious holidays, calendars of holidays, explanations of their names, but if you enter the word *holiday* in the Russian search engine Rambler.ru[1] in the same way the picture will

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[1] The search engines were accessed on July 23, 2021.

be different: the first window will show the windows with commercial content, reclassifying companies which deal with so-called event-service.

Socio-cultural factors in communication processes are more or less common. There are universal (or global) phenomena that are observed in different and quite distant from each other media systems and cultural situations (Svitich, 2013: 17). For example, American researcher M.J. Lasky (Lasky, 2005: 73, etc.) writes about a phenomenon characteristic of Western media (especially investigative journalism), which is unreliable, superficial, speculative presentation of events in order to create a sensation. Lasky sees this as a dangerous tendency to demonize politicians, dogmatize the media and even speak of the cultural degradation of Western society. This phenomenon, however, is also widely (and maybe even more widely) presented in the media reality of Central and Eastern Europe, as the Polish researcher T. Goban-Klas (Goban-Klas, 2007: 142, etc.) points out.

The aim of this article is to make a theoretical understanding of active processes in the modern Russian language of mass media, caused by the democratization of the society, especially in connection with the restructuring of the state and political system, which took place in Eastern Europe in the 1990s, and the subsequent events. These issues are partially reflected in the publications (Mokienko, 1996; Zasurskiy, 2004; Bushev, 2013; Sinelnikova, 2014; Khoroshunova, 2020; Solganik, 2008, etc.). Thus, G.Y. Solganik (Solganik, 2008: 473, etc.) wrote that democratization was the main direction of changes in the media language during the perestroika and post-perestroika period. Among the most notable phenomena at that time he referred to the stylistic diversity of journalistic texts, the growth of non-normative linguistic elements, linguistic innovations, the development of linguistic tools serving the increase of information content. E.L. Vartanova points out that the democratization of the media in the post-perestroika period was connected with the transformation of the Russian media system under the influence of Western European and North American standards. It was particularly reflected in the changes of style and structure of journalistic texts, and most of all in their reorientation "to the information standards of the Anglo-American journalism, to the classic principle of news and opinion sharing" (Vartanova, 2008: 138). O. Romanchuk (Romanchuk, 2008: 220, etc.) writes that democratization of society promoted development of analytical journalism.

Studying the democratization of media language in Russian science goes hand in hand with the study of language democratization in general, including the study of denormatization of public speech, expansion of spoken style in areas of official (particularly business) communication which were closed to it before. V.G. Kostomarov's exhaustive monograph "Linguistic Taste of the Epoch," first published back in 1996 and reprinted several times, was based entirely on the analysis of mass media (Kostomarov, 2019). Thus, the democratization of media language was mostly understood as a part of the speech culture problem as a whole, and by the late 2010s it was also included in articles devoted to the ecology of language systems (see: Kurashkina, 2015, as well as the works of the Vol-

gograd research group which proposed media monitoring methods from the eco-linguistic perspective: Shamne, 2011; Shamne, Prokhvatilova, 2009). Dissertations of different years, in which the problems of mass media language democratization have found different-sided coverage, deserve attention (Beglova, 2007; Skorokhodova, 2008; Shaidorova, 2009; Rynkovich, 2010; Karitskaya, 2013, etc.). In particular, analyzing the materials of Komsomolskaya Pravda, Yu. Rynkovich (Rynkovich, 2010) identifies such aspects of newspaper language in the post-Soviet era as the development of dialogization (orienting to the addressee), strengthening of evaluation; wide introduction of colloquialism in all media genres; strengthening of the position of language game and irony in mass media texts; expansion of forms and sources (including non-normative and non-codified) of intertextuality; increasing of speech aggression; heathenization and barbarization of media language.

At the same time, the observations made by researchers at different stages of the post-Soviet media development require constant updating due to the continuous dynamics of media development and the response of media communication language systems to the changing conditions of news production. In this respect, it is relevant to include theoretical arguments on the regularities of the media language de-modernization process, as well as to compare the examples of the active media democratization research epoch (2000–2010-s) with the current state of newspaper and journalistic style.

Methods and materials

The article has a review-theoretical character, that is why the appeal to the empirical material is conditioned by the task of corroborating the theoretical reasoning by concise examples, including those from the newest issues of Russian media. The linguistic commentary applied to the presented material is based on the method of critical discourse analysis, which is based on the discovered implicit meanings of the statements, conditioned by a certain speaker's ideology, reflecting his/her intentions (both conscious and subconscious). This method is designed to reveal the "will-to-power" and other effects, especially topical for political communication. As applied to the topic of media language democratization, critical discourse-analysis reveals the signs of socio-cultural processes that predetermine the general development of society, because media language reflects the intentions, expectations, and thinking styles of large groups of people.

Results

As the result of the conducted research, on the one hand, the socio-cultural processes (within the general trend toward democratization) that have influenced and continue to influence significantly mass communication and the language of Russian mass media: social construction of reality and media engagement, polarization of social groups and subcultural formations, replacement of the transmis-

sion model of media operations by the interaction model, the phenomenon of "echo-cameras" were revealed. On the other hand, the most important dynamic processes were characterized that expand the modern understanding of the consequences of media language democratization, such as the depatternization of language cliches of the totalitarian era, neosemantization, specialization, etc.

Discussion

The notion of language democratization

K. Ożóg (2001: 16) writes about several components of the process of society democratization in Eastern and Central European countries in the 1990s, which determined radical restructuring of the media system, meaning new political system of state administration, new political institutions, new economic relations (transition to the free market), creation of the foundations of information society, etc. Democratization of society was reflected in the nature of social communication and caused significant changes in the language of public discourses. This process had a general direction: the rejection of the new language of the totalitarian era. In addition to deideologization, in the language of the Russian media the tendency towards consumerism – the expansion of words (mainly nouns) directly related to consumer culture: names of industrial and commercial firms, names of goods, financial and economic terms, etc. – has become noticeable. Examples from texts published recently in the Novaya Gazeta newspaper testify to this:

> (1) financial assets, real estate, free finance, balanced financial result, credit institution, profit minus loss, banking sector, turnover, oil rent, monthly income, financial independence, corridor of opportunity, start-up capital.[2]

Interest in dialogic genres such as interviews, discussions, talk shows has increased significantly (Ilchenko, 2016: 11). In this regard, the conversational resources of the Russian language have been activated: questioning, commenting, contact-establishing. Thus, the journalist of Radio Svoboda Mumin Shakrirov, the author of an interview on the topic of the upcoming elections to the Russian State Duma,[3] uses predominantly questioning lines:

> (2) Who is the director, the Kremlin or Grudinin and Zyuganov?

> (3) And what will happen to the Yabloko candidates?

> (4) Alexandra, how did you understand this phrase by Biden?

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[2] https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2021/07/21/bednye-i-poslushnye
[3] https://www.svoboda.org/a/repressivnaya-mashina-kremlya-ne-znaet-ostanovok-grani-vremeni-s-muminom-shakirovym-efir-v-19-05/31421299.html

At the same time, the journalist takes the position of an equal participant in the dialogue, so he is not limited to questions; he defines problematic topics, interprets, predicts, and gives evaluations. Here are a few examples:

(5)   I understand that the question of whether they will take Grudinin's state farm away remains open.
[the journalist expresses his opinion]

(6)   It's a picture for Channel One: "Me and the President of the United States. He's powerful, and I'm tough."
[the journalist sneers]

(7)   Russians and Ukrainians are one people. Russian President Vladimir Putin tried to convince both countries of this.
[the journalist quotes, paraphrases the politician's opinion]

(8)   Yanukovich, one of Vladimir Putin's partners and allies, promised to introduce Russian as the second state language, but he did not. This speaks volumes about the value of a partner.
[the journalist evaluates]

Here we see an example of media dialogue genres development "with an eye" on the media logic of social networks: media language democratization is influenced by everyday communicative practices, including both the development of "oral-written" communication (Lutovinova, 2008), which is largely a speech transcription, and the constant "pressure" of oral practices on written forms.

Language democratization also means overcoming the excessively complex system of linguistic restrictions and its optimization. This, in particular, is reflected in syntactic structures simplification (the phenomenon of syntactic compression) and the reduction of sentence length (for details see: Lüger, 1995: 23, etc.).

The colloquialization of media language has mostly touched the lexicon. Since the 1990s, more and more colloquial, vernacular and slang lexical elements have appeared in journalistic texts, especially those that carry additional emotional component or negative evaluation (including vulgarisms). This trend covered not only popular periodicals (tabloids), but also serious newspapers.

The degree of prevalence of colloquial elements in the media turned out to be so high that some researchers, such as O.B. Sirotinina (Sirotinina, 2003) suggest to refer modern journalism to the "literary-jargony type of culture."

Obscene, slang expressions in modern media draw attention of regulatory bodies (including Roskomnadzor) that constantly toughen the penalties for public articulation of obscene words. Such tightening can be seen as a response to the widespread dissemination of such forms, their increasing legitimization, and a lowering of the threshold of "public sensitivity" to coarse language. In turn, this decrease in sensitivity to uncodified forms of expression can also be linked to the extremely rapid expansion of the most diverse (in age, profession, and educational level) strata of the population in Internet communication. Conditions are created not just for "oral-written" contacts, which have become much more active

with the widespread use of cell phones and messengers providing instant messaging (that is, creating the technical conditions for including words in written communication, which in the Soviet period could only be written as shocking graffiti on fences, walls or in elevators), but also for special forms of codification of such written exchanges outside the stable institutions of normatization of the Russian language: thus, obscene language in teenagers' correspondence began to be evaluated by the group members as a "new sincerity" and a peculiar way of testing group members for authenticity. At the same time, bans[4] only provoke an even greater use of obscenity[5]. In turn, the media act as a "mirror" of the declining threshold, broadcasting (also in spite of the bans) obscenisms, slang, and various forms of foul language.

The new model of mass communication

The most important condition for media democratization is political pluralism. At the same time, the peculiarity of modern media culture lies in its specific ambivalence. The so-called "social construction of reality" is realized by three types of actors: civil society – political and social organizations – media institutions (for more details see: McQuail, 2008: 452, etc.). In the traditional, transmissive model of media influence, the function of media institutions was to inform society and, to a large extent, to mediate, i.e. to mediate between socio-political and administrative institutions, on the one hand, and society, on the other (Nowak, 2006: 250 et al.). This idea underlies the widely-known conceptual model of communicative research by B. Westley and M. McLean (Westley, McLean, 1957).

According to P. Nowak (2006: 251), under the conditions of democratic society, the transmission model of media has been replaced by the interactive model, in which the positions of the sender and the receiver of information are balanced to a certain extent. Whereas Westley and McLean's mediation model assigns an intermediary role to media organizations: social institutions – media – society, in the new media their correlation has changed: media – social institutions – society.

The media impact is now realized in the mode of negation between all parties: the interpretation of media messages is conditioned by the affiliation of the recipients to a particular socio-cultural formation (this affiliation filters the content of media messages). This fact explains why, on the one hand, the media are interested in cooperation with political parties, public and religious organizations, and corporations, thanks to which their impact on society increases, or, more precisely, becomes more effective. On the other hand, political and state structures actively engage the media, thanks to which their impact on society takes indirect forms and, in other words, "is not conspicuous" (for example, in the pre-election agitation, see: Maydanova, Chepkina, "The Media in the Society") (Maydanova, Chepkina, 2011: 200, etc.). If we consider media culture from the point of view of

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[4] Since February, 2021 all social networks have to block the obscene content.
[5] https://www.rbc.ru/technology_and_media/05/02/2021/601bd5dd9a79470b25b108a2

society, then sociopolitical institutions should be referred to the sphere of their representation (on different levels of the social system), and the media – to the sphere of exteriorization of the cultural picture of the world, corresponding to a certain social group or social niche.

Critical discourse analysis of media allows to judge the subordination of the media to the media logic of communicative space, where political communication is no longer formed solely by institutional media with approved levels of responsibility for the transmission of meanings and ideologemes. The media, in a multi-actor space, are on an equal footing with "singles" and non-institutional voices, which are as important for the public as journalistic voices used to be. Under such conditions, the unwritten rules of network communication are perceived by professional media as new conditions for communication and for the construction of discourses according to these unwritten rules.

Oppositional texts

This state of affairs has several implications. The above-mentioned negation is realized under conditions of strong polarization of society: consumers of media information belong to different social groups, share different value systems, cultivate different types of behaviour (see Vereščagin, 1995: 214).[6] First of all, it concerns the opposition of two ideological camps: conservative-nationalist and liberal. Thus, media neutrality remains only in the sphere of industry and entertainment publications, while in the sphere of quality journalism (newspapers and magazines claiming to articulate and shape public opinion) there is a significant bias. Due to political and ideological engagement, journalistic texts are created in accordance with the convention of conflict and confrontation. This explains the significant role played by journalism, as well as journalists' frequent recourse to linguistic forms of expressiveness and (usually negative) evaluation. E.M. Vereshchagin (Vereščagin, 1995: 214, etc.) writes about radicalization of evaluations and war rhetoric in mass public discourses of the 1990s, cf. some examples from Vereshchagin's article:

(9)   Shoot him!

(10)   Up against the wall!

(11)   Prosecute!

(12)   Down with Gorbachev!

(13)   Hang them!

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[6] E.V. Chepkina writes: "Media texts are divided between segments of pro-power (state, pro-government) and critical (opposition) discourse" (Chepkina, 2017: 19). According to the researcher, this is associated with the crystallization of the "discursive identity" of individuals as members of the community of information consumers.

This rhetoric (and the corresponding vocabulary) is also widely represented in media texts, which was the subject of research by N.E. Petrova and L.V. Ratsiburskaya (Petrova, Ratsiburskaya, 2014: 34, etc.). Here is the example – a fragment of information recently published in the Russian-language newspaper Sovetskaya Belorussiya (23.07.2021):

(14)   In order to take harvest on high quality level and on time, to prevent losses and theft, to help villagers to collect grain in private subsidiary plots, and to help law enforcement agencies to establish close control over the harvest taking. The President gave these and other instructions at the meeting on the organization of harvesting campaign.

Ideologically marked elements take an important place in the small text on the topic of harvest: *to prevent losses and theft, to help law enforcement agencies to establish close control*. The presuppositional part of these expressions contains information about possible theft or sabotage, thus the harvest (as a perfectly peaceful agricultural action) is presented in terms of a situation of confrontation between hostile forces, is militarized. In this connection it is possible to refer to the concept of oppositional texts, which N.I. Klushina defines as follows:

Oppositional texts can include any text in which the author's point of view is asserted through harsh criticism, and the stylistic manner of speech is coloured negatively. <...> The publicist, instead of reviewing in detail and objectively the arguments of the other side, seeks to seize the initiative and discredit his "opponent" by any means. <...> In the oppositional text, there is a reduction of the factual basis at the expense of shock rhetoric, much attention is paid to the affective, expressive side of speech, the impact is carried out through the psycho-emotional sphere, rather than with the help of rational argumentation (Klushina, 2018: 109).

Following S.A. Gladkov (Gladkov, 2019: 82), one of the elements of oppositional texts is "foreign spatiality". In the light of this category, the mentioned author interprets, for example, the fake news in the Russian official Internet media about creating and testing biological weapons in the American medical centre in Tbilisi. S.A. Gladkov writes:

"Foreign spatiality" is created by the isolated territory – it is outside of Russia. The territory frightens by its mystery and poses a threat to the life of a simple person – dozens of people have supposedly died there recently (many on the same day), all the dead are registered under numbers, the "cause of death" column contains the word "unknown", etc. <...> Just as Count Dracula from B. Stoker's novel with the same name. Stoker in the aspect of the Other embodied xenophobic fears and anti-Semitic sentiments of Victorian England, so propaganda texts of Russian media appeal to the symbolic Other in the fear of liberal opposition, <...> environmental activists, <...> foreign intervention (Gladkov, 2019: 42).

In accordance with the convention of ideological confrontation, neosemantization, i.e. (as a rule, conscious and goal-oriented) reinterpretation of the signs cultivated by political opponents, has become widespread. This phenomenon in newspaper texts was widely spread in the 1990s in connection with the non-

referential use of proper names, which became the subject of a number of studies. Thus, I.E. Ratnikova, the author of a monograph on this topic (Ratnikova, 2003: 39, etc.), gives examples of neosemantization of the anthroponym *Chubais*:

(15)   The president had no other Chubais on hand.

(16)   Get your own Chubais, and you can tinker with him as you please.

(17)   In his own way, he is an Israeli Chubais.

Ratnikova indicates the secondary meanings of the anthroponym: 1) initiator and organizer of market reforms; 2) a key political figure, focusing on himself both the discontent of the opposition and the irritation of the people.

The pragmatic purpose of neosemantization is to create an ironic effect and mock the opponent. For example, the economist Ruslan Grinberg writes in the newspaper Izvestia (09.07.2013):

(18)   In general, we need a system *a la Stalin*, and "then we will catch up with and surpass the malicious West again."

Given the context, the reader understands that the message contains irony, as indicated by the quotation marks: the expressions *malignant West* and *catch up and surpass* refer to the communist newspeak of the past, as well as to the popular nationalist ideology of today. By retranslating ideologemes that are foreign to oneself, the author evokes a kind of catharsis and rejection of unacceptable concepts in readers (read more on the phenomenon of catharsis in public communication: Stoneman, 2013; Samuels, 2020).

Neosemantization helps to stimulate the historical memory and sociocultural competence of media users, in particular the knowledge of the most important key concepts and precedent texts, which can be seen as an important cultural (cognitive-supportive) function of the media. Of course, the source of many reminiscences are political events and politicians' statements. In this case, understanding reminiscences requires the reader or viewer to "stay informed." Since some media texts refer to other media texts, to a certain extent they have a recursive or meta-referential function within the media system.

At the same time, the language of the media that reflects political communication is becoming more and more noticeable for its communicative, contact-establishing functions, which level the political core of such communication. The political content associated with the assessment of reality, building a development strategy, tactics for achieving goals, analysis of the situation, mobilization, and consolidation of forces aimed at addressing socially significant tasks is becoming less and less relevant to the modern media. V.V. Fedorov (Fedorov, 2019) found that instead of political content, the media prefer to broadcast stories of specific persons (political storytelling), not different from "life-style" discourses.

Social differentiation of mass media language

Social differentiation and the corresponding engagement of the media contribute to a kind of particularization of certain functional sub-styles – within the framework of the journalistic-publicistic style. Social communication is increasingly limited to subcultures that cultivate not only their own systems of values and codes of conduct, but also their own systems of verbalization. In the first half of the twentieth century, M. Scheler (Scheler, 1926: 90) wrote about the particularization of the scientific community: the activity of scientists is directly related to their belonging to certain formations, schools, movements, doctrines. The German philosopher acknowledged that leaders play a significant role in scientific communities, although this character of social group functioning is more characteristic to socio-political reality. A.D. Koshelev (Koshelev, 2013: 3) believes that the differentiation of individual formations in modern linguistics is so strong that discussions between representatives of different scientific groups are unproductive and no consensus can be reached between them.

The mechanisms of social and semiotic differentiation of modern society, taking into account the active influence of the media, have been theorized by the American sociologist S.R. Sunstein (Sunstein, 2017). The scholar argues that thanks to new Internet technologies the dream has come true that everyone can get the information he or she is interested in and needs. In this kind of "targeting" there is a huge advantage of the modern Internet era. At the same time, the bundling and targeting ("portioning") of information carries a great danger. In the past, as Sunstein writes, the reader of a newspaper, regardless of the fact that he might have a certain opinion on a certain issue, also had the opportunity, or perhaps due to circumstances (i.e. due to the nature of media discourse in the "pre-Internet era") to at least occasionally consider the opinion of those who think otherwise. The Internet seems to offer unlimited possibilities for seeking and receiving information, but in fact it contributes to the isolation of individuals, i.e. their confinement within the so-called "echo chambers"[7] – as the social groups with which Internet users identify themselves – are metaphorically defined. This is the paradox of globalization. On the one hand, Internet networks are international: a specialist in a particular field, dealing with a particular problem, can easily establish contacts with other specialists, regardless of their place of work and location – for example, the Internet networks for scientists Academia or ResearchGate. The globalization of human interaction, however, is more about its technological aspect. Therefore, on the other hand, the fact that the Internet makes possible virtually unlimited communication between individuals belonging to the same sphere of activity or hobby does not contribute to the spread and conventionalization of ideas and values. On the contrary, social differentiation and sometimes even con-

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[7] Regional and local media (for example, the local press, as well as periodicals influential in certain localities and communities) have an "echo chamber" character to a certain extent. Zasurskiy (2008: 42) associates their development with globalization, although this can also be seen as a consequence of democratization.

frontation of subcultures increases. Globalization is thus a very relative phenomenon, not to be confused with the notion of universalism.

Information specially selected using computer algorithms for a group of consumers (or even for a specific consumer) not only expands knowledge, but also leads to radicalization of views and beliefs. Users mostly receive information that corresponds to their expectations, their needs, their picture of the world – thus alternative "possible worlds" are (functionally) blocked. As a result of such an impact of the Internet, certain ideological formations, ideologemes and corresponding forms of their iconic (in particular, linguistic) representation crystallize and radicalize.

In Russian media language, this process is reflected in several phenomena. First, there is an idiosyncrasy of variants of the language social functioning – the multiplication of the already mentioned sub-styles, which first of all finds its reflection in the cultivation of special vocabulary. M. Wojtak (Wojtak, 2000: 235) writes that in the case of niche periodicals devoted to certain spheres of activity or various hobbies and interests,[8] we are not so much talking about informing readers (in accordance with the traditional transmission model, see above), but rather about virtual interaction, where participants form one group with common interests and values, as well as with common jargon ("people communicate with people from the same group"). It is no coincidence that texts published in such publications are replete with special vocabulary, often of English origin. As an example, here is an excerpt from an article published in the Russian VeloZhurnal:

(19)   If you compare a two-pod and a hardtail in the same price range, the bike with two shock absorbers may have lower-level attachments. Of course, that does not eclipse the joy and excitement of suspension performance. But over time, the cyclist will inevitably have the desire to install better derailleurs or other components. Then a small upgrade can exceed the cost of a hardtail with expensive suspension[9].

In this excerpt, we find some terms characteristic of this sub-style: *double-saddle, hardtail, upgrade, attachment, linkage*, which would most likely be incomprehensible to someone outside this hobbyist group.

The phenomenon of "echo chambers" is also evident in syntax. D.G. Bogushevich (Bogushevich, 1985: 47) points out that the nature of grammatical structurization of speech messages depends on the degree of the supposed ignorance of the addressee: the less communicative partners have common cognitive and social experience, the more organized and composite the transmitted message should be. A. Awdiejew and G. Habrajska (Awdiejew, Habrajska, 2006: 216) also argue that the structure of texts of public (especially official) communication is subject to the requirement of formal (lexico-grammatical) representation of infor-

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[8] According to J.N. Zasurskiy (Zasurskiy, 2008: 42) the number of such publications has recently increased dramatically.
[9] https://velo-journal.ru/articles/dvuhpodves__chto_takoe_i_kak_vybrat

mational and semantic structures. On the contrary, in communication "with one's own" such representation is superfluous. It is not by chance that J. Warchala (2003: 44) points out that the language of modern media is characterized by a low degree of grammaticalization of texts. Thus, in the texts of popular periodicals (tabloids and colour magazines) implicature, i.e. non-complete, reduced realization of basic semantic structures, is widespread. B.Y. Norman (Norman, 1993) was one of the first to describe the widespread use in Russian newspaper texts of constructions with relative adjectives of the following types:[10]

(20)   knitted details 'details of the sphere of intimacy associated with lingerie, usually made of knitwea'

(21)   sailcloth legs 'legs in sailcloth pants.'

Their meaning is determined by the reader through the context analysis.

The phenomenon of the "echo chamber", however, can be seen as a factor in the segregation of the public sphere, reflecting a consequence of media language democratization, such as creating relatively autonomous communication spaces. As long as we are talking about different hobbies, such "spaces for the like-minded people" do not seem problematic; but the very principle of elaborating and developing specific language forms that reflect different levels of sociolect creates the basis not only for "associations of interests", but also for the large-scale separation of national and other communities. This is especially relevant in political communication, where some "echo-chamber" groups exist thanks to "consolidation against" other groups. The boundary of "one's own" space is marked precisely by "dissociation" from the other, which becomes the ground for developing hate speech, which corresponds to many undesirable effects of the society democratization (including the levelling of cultural values, tolerance, communicative dialogical skills, aimed at constructive forms of public discussion). Media language reflects the diversity of interests and "niches" of activity – and at the same time contributes to the further cultivation of "their own" spaces, existing not autonomously, but in a conflictual juxtaposition and contact with other pro-spaces. In this case, social differentiation is represented in communicative political practices as a hierarchical system where each segment seeks to strengthen its position by opposing others as "inferior". Although the phenomenon of "echo chambers" has been extensively studied from different perspectives (see Ebo, 1998; Galston, 2003; Alshaabi et al., 2020), it is of great interest to study this phenomenon through the lens of language democratization, and to study "echo chambers" not only in social media, but specifically among professional journalists and in national media systems in general.

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[10] These are examples from the above-mentioned article by Norman.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be noted that the factor of democratization of the Russian media language is generally assessed differently: on the one hand, the linguistic structure of texts is approaching usus and is more in line with the cognitive and communicative needs of consumers. Thanks to this, journalistic texts are becoming more natural and more attractive to readers, listeners and viewers. Partly in this way the empathic function of the media language is fulfilled: by using colloquial, or even slangy elements, the authors of messages make it clear that they are consciously identified with a certain social group.

On the other hand, democratization causes a blurring of the boundaries of the literary norm, and at the same time ignores the linguistic potential (lexical and grammatical) that corresponds (as defined by G.P. Neshchimenko, see Neshchimenko, 1999: 35) to the areal of higher communicative functions.

There are many indications that gradually, over time, different tendencies in the sphere of mass communication and media language are configured in accordance with the principle of optimality, as if fitting in with each other, fit into a certain integral and balanced macrostructure, which some specialists consider to be a language ecosystem. Modern European societies at the beginning of the third decade of the twentieth century are coming to a relative stabilization, especially against the background of the stormy period of state and political restructuring of the 1990s. Consequently, the media language is taking shape reflecting this stabilization: the media are gradually claiming less and less of a voice "for all," as in the transmissive period of mass communication development. At the same time, the media language democratization also manifests itself in such an important aspect as media convergence: each particular publication seeks to reach different types of audiences who prefer one social network or another, creating accounts in the networks and posting news content in the formats required at such platforms. At the same time, one and the same media can meet the expectations of different audiences (users of Facebook or VKontakte), has to "adjust" to such expectations, make its content flexible, which leads to "loss of face" of a particular media. The media language democratization in all its manifestations reflects general global trends in the development of communication, where simultaneously with unification and the erasure of borders the principle of individualization is also effective: the media are rather looking for the "right tone," which means "effective approach," to "their own" audience, obeying the logic of such audiences, but not becoming their leaders or "masters of thoughts." In such a situation the study of mass media language enables to draw conclusions not only and not so much about the level of journalists' professionalism but rather about the state of the public sphere, which is understood as a polyphonic space of extra-institutional discussion of public problems: the choice of discussion topics, the style of such discussion, the borders of tolerance or non-tolerance towards "alien" voices help to understand not "the language taste of the epoch," as V.G. Kostomarov defined this cho-

rus of voices, but the "ensemble of linguistic resources" of a particular time, actualized due to the logic of the technologies of communicative space.

The observations and generalizations lead to the conclusion that the media language democratization has a number of parameters that require special study: being a product of the general democratization of society, it nevertheless leads to new hierarchies and various manifestations of inequality. Issues of speech culture or norms are receding into the background, and linguistic stratification, leading to the destruction of national ensembles, gets its basis and space in the language of the media.

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Некоторые аспекты демократизации языка современных российских СМИ

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Аннотация. Исследование имеет обзорно-теоретический характер, а его предметом являются активные процессы в языке современных российских средств массовой информации, вызванные демократизацией общества, особенно в связи с перестройкой государственной и политической системы, которая в странах Восточной Европы произошла в 1990-е годы. С опорой на научные публикации, а также на эмпирический материал (современные журналистские тексты) осуществляется систематизация социокультурных процессов (в рамках общей тенденции к демократизации), которые оказали и продолжают оказывать влияние на язык СМИ. К этим процессам отнесены социальное конструирование действительности и ангажирование СМИ, поляризация социальных групп и формаций, вытеснение трансмиссионной модели функционирования СМИ моделью взаимодействия, феномен «эхо-камер». В связи с воздействием социально-политического фактора отмечаются наиболее важные динамические процессы в языке СМИ, такие как депатетизация языковых штампов эпохи тоталитаризма, неосемантизация, количественный рост лексики, относящейся к сфере консьюмеризма, активация средств, обслуживающих сферу диалогических отношений, преодоление чрезмерно сложного характера языковой системы и др. Показано, что переход к модели взаимодействия СМИ (с политическими, религиозными, общественными организациями, корпорациями – с одной стороны, и сообществом потребителей – с другой стороны) обусловил социальную ангажированность медийных дискурсов, что в свою очередь вызвало рост этикетирующих, оценочных и экспрессивных текстовых элементов. Другая важная тенденция связана с феноменом «эхо-камер», который в языке СМИ проявляется в специализации лексики и снижении степени грамматикализации сообщений. Представленные в статьи аспекты демократизации языка СМИ в перспективе могут служить в качестве параметров, в соответствии с которыми может проводиться мониторинг СМИ, включающий элементы лингво-критического характера.

Ключевые слова: русский язык, функциональный стиль, подстиль, язык СМИ, журналистика, демократизация, коллоквиализация, социальная и функциональная дифференциация языка