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**КОГНИТИВНАЯ ГАРМОНИЯ КАК МЕХАНИЗМ ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ
ТОЛЕРАНТНОСТИ/ИНТОЛЕРАНТНОСТИ НА ПУБЛИЧНЫХ СТРАНИЦАХ В СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ СЕТЯХ
VK.COM И FACEBOOK, ПОСВЯЩЕННЫХ СМЕШАННЫМ ЕДИНОБОРСТВАМ**

Научная статья

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Аннотация

Статья посвящена механизму формирования толерантности/интолерантности на страницах в социальных сетях, посвященных смешанным единоборствам. Авторы выяснили, что коммуникативная среда социальных сетей является результатом реакций пользователей социальных сетей, которые соотносят свои позиции с материалом или комментарием, которые они видят в социальных сетях. Когда пользователи воспринимают сообщения в социальных сетях, в их языковом сознании происходит взаимодействие метаязыковых репрезентаций, возникающих при реконструкции интерпретируемых сообщений и имеющихся метаязыковых репрезентаций прошлого опыта. Механизмом формирования коммуникативной толерантности/интолерантности выступает когнитивная гармония, которая проявляется как познание состояния равновесия взаимодействия метаязыковых репрезентаций, разворачивающихся в упорядоченной причинно-следственной трихотомии и данных как цельное и безусловное переживание интерпретатора (автора комментария на странице), предопределенное дивинацией (ожиданием).

Ключевые слова: толерантность, интолерантность, социальные сети, коммуникация, спорт, смешанные единоборства.

**COGNITIVE HARMONY AS FORMATION MECHANISM FOR TOLERANCE/INTOLERANCE ON PUBLIC
PAGES OF VK.COM AND FACEBOOK DEDICATED TO THE MIXED MARTIAL ARTS**

Research article

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Abstract

The article discusses communicative tolerance/intolerance on the social media pages that are dedicated to mixed martial arts. Authors have found out that the communicative environment of social media is the result of reactions of users (interpreters) who correlate their position with the material or comment of what they see on social media pages. There is an interaction of metalanguage representations of interpreted messages and existing metalanguage representations of experience that's happening at the cognitive level when users of social media interpret messages on social media pages. The mechanism of the formation of communicative tolerance/intolerance appears as a cognitive harmony. It manifests itself as a state of equilibrium between the interactions of metalanguage representations that are unfolding in an ordered trichotomy that is predetermined by divination (expectation).

Keywords: tolerance, intolerance, social media, communication, sports, mixed martial arts.

Introduction

Social media have become the fastest-growing segment of the Internet and a very important field of communication. Nowadays, the term «social media» means web resources that allow an individual user or a specific group of people to represent themselves on the Internet by creating their own page and communicating with other users. Social media attract the interest of researchers, including linguists, who studied it from the point of the communicative space (S.Y. Omelyanchuk, M.S. Shevchenko, I.A. Yurina, N.Y. Borodulina, M.N. Makeeva, V.A. Chumakova, N.G. Marchenko, V.D. Vinnik, A.A. Selyutin) and from the point of view of the language tools used in them (A.A. Matusevich, B.N. Vedeshkina, N.E. Aspidova, M.S. Gonchar, L.S. Smirnova, T. S. Piyanzina, E.S. Smagina).

We consider comments on the social media pages that are dedicated to the mixed martial arts. Mixed martial arts is the fastest growing sport in recent years. Combat sports are particularly vivid in expressing the aggression, competitiveness, and spectacle that are inherent in sports. Sports and the behaviour of sport fans are relevant topics for linguistic studies. At the same time, the behavior of mixed martial arts fans on the Internet has not been the subject of linguistic study.

For our study we selected public pages that are covering mixed martial arts from VK.com and Facebook. Public pages work as communication centers for different communities. The content of the public page is available to everyone, but only page managers can upload information to the so-called «wall» of the page. Most public pages give their followers an opportunity to comment. Public pages dedicated to sports is an unexplored research niche since social media comments were not considered by linguists in terms of the peculiarities of the cognitive mechanism that leads to the formation of tolerance/intolerance.

So-called «toxicity» is one of the main features of the Internet as a field of communication. Toxicity can be defined as an extremely harsh, malicious, or harmful quality [6]. Internet toxicity represents an increased tendency towards inappropriate behaviors during online conversations. Toxic behavior on the Internet includes offensive messages, as well as prolonged

harassment of individuals or groups of people while using social media, instant messengers, and other types of Internet communication [2, P.879]. Toxic behavior is an example of intolerance on the Internet. Toxicity is a cause of growing concern among website managers.

We assume that the communicative environment of public pages devoted to the mixed martial arts leads to intolerant communication among the followers of these pages, due to the aggressive nature of this sport. In order to stop the growing process of intolerance in social media, it is necessary to find out what is the cognitive mechanism that leads to the formation of tolerance/intolerance.

The reliability of the research results is provided by the representative corpus of linguistic material and the application of traditional and modern scientific methods and techniques. The study materials are 11,000 comments on the public pages that are dedicated to mixed martial arts from 2017 to 2019.

This type of study determined the use of both general scientific methods (observation, induction/deduction, analysis/synthesis, systematization, classification), and proper linguistic methods, such as the method of linguistic description, content analysis, cognitive analysis, and interpretative analysis. An experimental method has been used, which made it possible to obtain study material in the form of survey results.

Findings

While studying the features of the communication mechanism on sports-themed social media pages we found the following. Using a cognitive approach while identifying the characteristics of communication on sports-themed social media pages leads to the identification of the semantic aspect of social interaction. The cognitive approach is based on recognizing the social media user as an analyzing person, because this person exists in the world of information that needs to be understood, evaluated, and used. As a result, the way social media users think determines how they feel and how they act. The cognitive approach to communication allows us to analyze the totality of factors that affect the process of communication.

The thought process is characterized by self-regulation [9]. It is about the orientation of the subscriber (interpreter) in his own cognitive domain. The interpreter enters into a relationship with emerging and existing metalanguage representations while interpreting the message. When interpreting the already existing information in the memory of the interpreter, which is presented in the form of metalanguage representations, acts as the knowledge that can influence the process of perception during the further reconstruction of the metatext. In all such cases, the decisive role belongs to the thought activity, which is aimed at streamlining emerging and existing metalanguage representations with which the interpreter is in a state of adaptive interaction.

Cognitologists agree that mental representations are used to represent knowledge in the human mind and that during the process of thinking people have mental procedures that operate on mental representations [10, P.4].

As a result of perception, the author of the comment transforms the perceived information in accordance with his ideas. In other words, the transformed information acquires its specific meaning for the subject of perception, since the perception experience of the interpreter and his knowledge background are activated and this makes it possible to further use this information in appropriate situations. So, there is a coordination of mental representations of experience (knowledge that the subject possesses) and mental representations of the perceived message found on social media that leads the subject to express his (own) attitude to the received information.

Interpretation (perception) of news messages (text, audio, and video) on the sports-themed social media pages is organically merged with the construction of action schemes. The action scheme is a special way of interaction of metalanguage representations during the perception (interpretation) of different messages. The result of the interpretation is commenting that are posted by users of social media.

In our case, when users perceive news messages on social media, the action scheme is based on the cause-effect relationships between representations that emerge during the process of formation of communicative tolerance/intolerance.

Subscribers of social media pages that are dedicated to the mixed martial arts seek to understand, interpret, anticipate and control their personal experiences while drawing the conclusions based on their past experiences and making assumptions about the future [7, P. 135]. So, subscriber perceives the messages from those pages (comments of other subscribers, news messages and different videos) from his position, and then publishes the comments, again in accordance with his own experience. The subscriber wants to influence other users and expresses his position for the perception of others. All stages of perception are a process of reconciling the existing opinion with the opinion that is published on social media with the aim of influencing other subscribers' opinion.

To confirm our proposition we used an experimental method that has many advantages, such as the speed of obtaining information of interest, the reliability of the results obtained, the objectivity of the scientific result, the possibility of repeated reproduction of the experiment.

We conducted a survey regarding the perception of information in social media. Our respondents are the followers of «My Life is MMA» public page, which is one of the biggest combat sports themed webpage in Russia. Most of the respondents were male aged between 16 to 27 years old. They were asked the following questions:

Do you freely express your opinion on that page?

Do you read (or watch) the publication material before adding your comment on it?

What kind of mixed martial arts fan were you when you became a subscriber to that page?

Has your opinion about the fighters ever changed after seeing some particular publications?

The survey is aimed to confirm the coordination of mental representations of experience with mental representations of perceived messages for the subscribers of the «My Life is MMA» page.

Our hypothesis says that subscribers of the «My Life is MMA» page approach information on social media with an opinion that may change during the interpretation of the information received.

Survey Results: 377 respondents feel that they freely express their opinion when they post comments on «My Life is MMA» page. 3 respondents do not think so.

Then, the survey participants answered the following question: *Do you read (or watch) the publication material before adding your comment to it?* 378 responses have been received. 370 respondents get acquainted with the published material on «My Life is MMA» page, coordinating their opinion with new information before leaving a comment. 8 respondents leave a comment without looking at the publication.

While answering the next question, 204 respondents indicated that they had been fans of a particular fighter when they first followed «My Life is MMA» page. 145 people were neutral spectators of mixed martial arts, without being a fan of any individual fighter, and 31 respondents indicated that they were haters of certain fighters when they first followed that page.

The next survey question was: *Did your opinion about the fighters change after seeing some particular publications?* 379 responses have been received. 352 respondents believe that their opinion about the fighters changed after reading individual publications on «My Life is MMA» page. Only 27 people indicate that their opinions have remained the same, despite new information received.

Those users who recognize changes in their opinions as a result of reading the publications then answered the following question: *How does your opinion change most often?* 193 respondents indicate that their opinion on the fighters change for the better after reading news on «My Life is MMA» page — they become fans of these fighters. 111 people admit that their opinion of individual fighters is changing for the worse — they become haters of fighters after their statements or their fights. 48 people have changed their opinion about the fighters to neutral.

Then the respondents answered the following question regarding an individual fight that could change the subscribers' opinion about UFC fighter Colby Covington: *Has your attitude to Colby Covington changed after his fight against Kamaru Usman?*

This athlete is known for his loud, disrespectful statements. His fight with Kamaru Usman may change an opinion on him in different ways — on the one hand, fans could be disappointed in Covington because he has lost after a lot of trash-talking. On the other hand, Covington had a very competitive and spectacular fight, in which he managed to hold on until the last round despite his injuries.

351 responses to this question have been received. 66 respondents are the haters of Colby Covington and their opinion after the fight has changed only for the worse, due to the fact that he was defeated after his loud statements. 53 respondents admit that they are the haters of the fighter, but their opinion about Covington has changed for the better after the spectacular fight. 50 respondents are neutral about Covington and their opinion about the fighter has changed for the better. 47 people had been fans of Covington before the fight, and the fight did not affect their position — they remained his fans, despite the defeat. 38 people had been haters of Covington before his fight and their position did not change. 33 people had been neutral towards Covington, but their opinion on the fighter changed for the worse because he lost after aggressive statements and promises. 32 people had been fans of Covington before the fight, and after the fight, they began to relate to the fighter only better, impressed by his stamina. 19 respondents admitted that their attitude towards Covington had been neutral and the fight did not affect their opinion on the fighter. 13 people admitted that they had been fans of Covington before the fight, but after the defeat they became disappointed in him.

Our experiment showed that subscribers of the «My Life is MMA» page freely express their opinion on that page. They approach publications on a page with a formed opinion and get acquainted with the publications. Before leaving a comment they coordinate their opinion with the information received. The subscribers approach publications while being the fans and haters of individual fighters, as well as neutral spectators of the sport. We see how exactly the opinion of these groups can change after a certain event that is covered on «My Life is MMA» page. This confirms our hypothesis that subscribers interpret the information received in social media, correlating it with the existing opinion.

While studying the cognitive mechanism of the formation of communicative tolerance in sports-themed social media pages, we have found out the following. Structuring (modeling) and comprehension take place simultaneously since the thought in a subscriber's mind is born while he is adapting to the new and existing information. Divination (expectation) helps the human brain to categorize new information based on previous experience [1, P. 82]. Divination works as the adaption tool during the interpretation, which is important when a person acquires knowledge about reality [4, P. 63]. A social media user constantly faced with categorization that allows them to complete the scheme of interpretation.

We see the frame model as a suitable one for representing the mechanisms of interpretation. A frame is a cognitive model that is structured as a SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema, which is representing the most fundamental knowledge of motion [5, P. 206].

A frame is a triad of temporally and causally related representations, and, as a general and abstract structure, it can be associated with different situations and used for a variety of purposes: to understand, execute, and make conclusions.

In our study, the cognitive triad of perception consists of:

1) Mental representations of subscribers of sports-themed pages who have their own idea of athletes — positive, negative, or neutral.

Among users of sports-themed social media pages, there are two groups of linguistic personalities that can be distinguished: the first group — fans, emotionally evaluating the actions, and the results of the direct participants of sports events (fighters); the second group — spectators who just watch sports.

2) Mental representations of the messages that subscribers of sports-themed pages perceive on social media — news messages, comments of other subscribers, video, and audio materials.

3) Mental representations of comments left by social media users during the process of perceiving messages posted on the sports-themed social media pages.

After conducting surveys of subscribers of «My Life is MMA» page, we have confirmed our hypothesis that says that the communicative environment of social media is the result of reactions of users (interpreters) who correlate their position with

the material or comment that they see on social media. In other words, there is an interaction of metalanguage representations of interpreted messages and existing metalanguage representations of past experience that's happening at the cognitive level when users of social media pages interpret messages on social media. This type of correlation of mental representations of experience (knowledge that a subject possesses) and mental representations of a perceived message found on social media appears as a cognitive harmony. So, cognitive harmony acts as a mechanism for the formation of communicative tolerance, which manifests itself as a state of equilibrium between the interaction of metalanguage representations that are unfolding in an ordered trichotomy [8]. This approach fits into the scientific trend known as *linguistic interpretation* (V. Z. Demiankov, N. Chomsky, RS Jackendoff, W. Harris, etc.) with its idea that «interpretation is a purposeful cognitive activity which is establishing and/or maintaining harmony in the world of the interpreter. It recognizes the properties of the speech context and places the results of this recognition in the space of the internal world of the interpreter. It also obtains a holistic object (the result of interpretation) and eliminates what is sometimes called «cognitive dissonance» [3, P. 62].

The affective and cognitive aspects of behavior are inseparable while remaining different. They are inseparable since any interchange with metalanguage representations involves both structuring (modeling) and expression of feelings. The communication of social media users includes three components: interpretation and understanding of information that is posted on social media, writing comments, as well as expressing feelings experienced during the performance of these actions. Those feelings are expressed by the author of the comment using his own attitude to the information received.

Conclusion

The study of the cognitive mechanism of the formation of tolerance and intolerance on sports-themed social media pages shows that:

1) The communicative environment of social media is the result of reactions of users (interpreters) who correlate their position with the material or comment on what they see on social media. There is an interaction of metalanguage representations of interpreted messages and existing metalanguage representations of the user's experience that's happening at the cognitive level when users of social media pages interpret messages on social media.

2) The mechanism of the formation of communicative tolerance appears as a cognitive harmony. It manifests itself as a state of equilibrium between the interactions of metalanguage representations that are unfolding in an ordered trichotomy that is predetermined by divination (expectation).

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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