

IMAGES OF REFLECTED REALITY IN THE SPEECH GENRE "READER'S RESPONSE"

Research article

Zemlyanskaya E.N.^{1,*}, Koroleva N.M.², Velichko I.F.³

¹ORCID : 0000-0002-4304-1190;

²ORCID : 0000-0002-7526-011X;

^{1,2}Southwest State University, Kursk, Russian Federation

³Kursk Institute of Cooperation – branch of Belgorod University of Cooperation, Economics and Law, Kursk, Russian Federation

* Corresponding author (beseda.lena[at]yandex.ru)

Abstract

The article examines reader feedback in the context of women's illustrated magazines. The purpose of the article is to present the speech genre "reader's response" as a holistic system-functional text formation that consists of two subsystems: content system and content presentation system (internal form). The goal is to solve the following tasks: 1) to explore "evaluativity" as an aggregate systemic quality of the speech genre "reader's response", which, on the one hand, is an expression of the cognitive-evaluative connection with the reflected reality, presented in the content system in the "images of femininity" and, on the other hand, it is an expression of communicative-evaluative relations in their value and emotional-evaluative aspects; 2) to study the content specifics of female readers' responses, substantively presented in the "images of femininity". The results of the study can be used as material for studying the functional aspect of the text and language, and would also help to develop adequate methods for studying communicative and speech processes within the framework of holistic finished works.

Keywords: women's magazine, reader's response, image of femininity, evaluativity, concept.

ОБРАЗЫ ОТРАЖЕННОЙ ДЕЙСТВИТЕЛЬНОСТИ В РЕЧЕВОМ ЖАНРЕ «ЧИТАТЕЛЬСКИЙ ОТКЛИК»

Научная статья

Землянская Е.Н.^{1,*}, Королева Н.М.², Величко И.Ф.³

¹ORCID : 0000-0002-4304-1190;

²ORCID : 0000-0002-7526-011X;

^{1,2}Юго-Западный Государственный университет, Курск, Российская Федерация

³Курский институт кооперации – филиал Белгородского университета кооперации, экономики и права, Курск, Российская Федерация

* Корреспондирующий автор (beseda.lena[at]yandex.ru)

Аннотация

В статье читательские отклики исследуются в контексте женских иллюстрированных журналов. Цель статьи – представить речевой жанр «читательский отклик» как целостное системно-функциональное текстовое образование, состоящее из двух подсистем: системы содержания и системы изложения содержания (внутренней формы). Поставленная цель предполагает решение следующих задач: 1) исследовать «оценочность» как совокупное системное качество речевого жанра «читательский отклик», которое, с одной стороны, является выражением познавательно-оценочной связи с отражаемой действительностью, представленной в системе содержания в «образах женственности» и, с другой стороны – выражением коммуникативно-оценочных отношений в их ценностном и эмоционально-оценочном аспектах; 2) изучить содержательную специфику женских читательских откликов, предметно представленную в «образах женственности». Результаты исследования могут быть использованы как материал для изучения функционального аспекта текста и языка, а также могут помочь выработать адекватные методы исследования коммуникативно-речевых процессов в рамках целостных законченных произведений.

Ключевые слова: женские журналы, читательский отклик, образ женственности, оценочность, концепт.

Introduction

The article is devoted to the study of the systemic features of one of the most popular speech genres in the field of mass communication - the reader's response. The texts of readers' responses from the world-famous, authoritative, English-language women's magazines "Cosmopolitan", "Marie Claire", "Red", "Seventeen", "Vanity Fair" and "Zest" were selected as the research material. The sample size was 248 responses for the period from 1996 to 2011.

Being focused on such communicative and pragmatic goals as analysis, critical evaluation and discussion of materials published in the media (women's magazines), readers' responses acquire a cumulative systemic quality, with which the concept of "evaluativity" is associated in the article.

Evaluativity as the main system-forming factor finds its expression already at the initial stage of creating the text of the reader's response. The author of the response, demonstrating his point of view in relation to a particular phenomenon, evaluates it in one way or another, both on the basis of himself and on the basis of his own essence, orientation, interests and goals. This is actually expressed in the choice and classification of facts and phenomena of reality, in their description from a certain point of view, in specific linguistic means, cf.

1. I found your 'Faces Of Addiction' photos shocking. – "Our drug addict mugshots horrified you"

2. I couldn't help but compare the quite dignity and strength of the 9/11 widows with the shallow hedonism of the Cake members described in "Girls, Uninterrupted". – "Feminists on Parade" [13].

In reader responses, evaluativity consists of two relations that mediate goal-setting and transformative activities [1]:

– cognitive-evaluative, which is based on the reflection of the object and the attitude of the subject towards it (subject relations)

– communicative and evaluative (context of activity, information relations).

Cognitive-evaluative attitude is expressed in the worldview, in the principles and rules of social behavior. This type of relationship is correlated denotatively with objective reality. It represents the "primary", reproductive level of sensory reflection, which is associated with the direct reproduction of the object, its reflection through the repetition of past experience.

The communicative-evaluative attitude, or "secondary", productive level of sensory reflection has its object in a primary image in the unity of its cognitive and communicative sides. As a result, the primary image is rethought into a secondary image. It is enriched with evaluative content which is communicative and emotional by nature. [2].

The subject of objective-subjective relations in readers' responses defines in a broad sense the "gender problem", reflecting the moral aspirations and interests of the female readership [3], [4].

The materials of illustrated women's magazines affect "all" areas of women's life: professional career, sexual relationships, fashion, travelling, etc. They form ideas about femininity that are relevant to modern gender culture. They form ideas about the forms and ways of representing the authentic femininity of the "identification system", through which self-presentation as a "real" woman is possible.

Readers' responses are a mirror of society, which presents a rating of social values of the female part of society. The problems that are the most relevant at the moment for women, come to the fore in responses. The list of topics discussed in the responses of the journals we have selected includes: love relationships between women and men; women's health; motherhood; woman's appearance; female alcoholism; extremism and terrorism; sick children; fashion; celebrity life; sexual violence against a woman; owning a business; women's rights in Third World countries.

Answering the question "What do women write about?" and extracting from the texts of readers' responses the positions of their authors, it is possible to reconstruct a certain ideal, differentiated "image" of a modern woman.

The study of the "image of femininity" was based on the theory of "linguistic conceptualism" [5], [6], [7], [8]. With the help of the NewSlow computer word processing program, as well as on the basis of observation methods, quantitative and statistical calculations, a number of basic concepts was identified in reader responses. They form "images of femininity" such as marriage/romance, motherhood/family, health/illness, society/law, celebrity/gloss, etc. We also identified "key" or "support" words that represent concepts at the verbal level. After all, the thoughts and feelings of women, their perception and evaluation of replicated gender images are embodied in the words exactly

In the course of the analysis, nine "images of femininity" were identified and classified:

1. A woman who admires a glamorous lifestyle" (43 responses) is presented in the concepts of CELEBRITY (keywords – celebrity, star, model beautiful, young, talent, movie, cover), GLOSS (magazine, interview, picture, photo, article, fashion, glossy);

2. Healthy woman" (38 responses): HEALTH (food, exercise, diet, weight, healthy, fit, great, to eat, to run, to recover, to inspire), ILLNESS (anorexia, cancer, disorder, eczema, headache, illness, problem, sufferer, to suffer, alcohol, to drink);

3. Woman – a public figure" (38 responses): SOCIETY (society, country, world, people, woman, man, transsexual, innocent, young, problem, illness, poverty, war, conflict, money, drug, crush, bomber, suicide, to kill), RIGHT (life, work, freedom, schools, safety, health, job, education, human);

4. Happy woman" (30 responses): AFFAIR (affair, relationship, sexual, secret, boyfriend, woman, guy, man, partner, friend, prostitute, addiction, love, sex, to cheat, to leave), MARRIAGE (marriage, couple, family, husband, child, to arrange);

5. Woman - the keeper of the hearth" (29 responses): MOTHERHOOD (kids, baby, child, son, daughter, work), FAMILY (family, marriage, couple, husband, mother, father, parents, widow, home, to divorce);

6. Beautiful Woman" (19 responses): APPEARANCE (size, weight, sexy, exercise, surgery, chemicals, products, natural, cosmetic, to look);

7. Businesswoman" (19 responses): HEROINE (woman, person, young, to inspire, to make, to do, can), BUSINESS (to try, to have, to set up, agency, company, dream);

8. Woman - philanthropist" (17 responses): CHARITY (charity, donation, to sponsor, to help, to save, money, children, animals);

9. Strong Woman" (11 responses): VIOLENCE (abuse, rape, violence, to abuse, to rape, domestic, sexual, victim, children, woman, fear, to suffer, rapist, abuser).

Let us consider in more detail one of the actual images of femininity - "Healthy Woman" at the conceptual and verbal level.

Discussion

38 reader responses are dedicated to this image of femininity, in which they discuss the following topics: healthy eating (5 responses); the role of sport in a woman's life (4 responses); eating disorders (8 responses); mental disorders (7 responses); skin diseases (2 responses); drug efficacy (4 responses); breast cancer (3 responses); problems of transplantation of vital organs (1 response); female alcoholism (4 responses). The focus of these readers' responses is the history of seriously ill women fighting for life, for the right to be a full-fledged member of society. These women serve as a worthy example and a call to others to love and appreciate life.

The basic concepts of this image of femininity include "HEALTH" and "ILLNESS".

The representatives of the concept "HEALTH" are words that name the foundations of health (*health, food, exercise, diet, gym*) and their features (*healthy, fit, great*); the main actions to achieve a healthy form (*to eat, to run*), words that name the result of a healthy lifestyle (*to recover, to inspire*).

The concept of "ILLNESS" corresponds to keywords that name diseases (*anorexia, cancer, depression, eating disorder, eczema, headache, illness, insomnia, panic attacks*) and their consequences (*problem, weight, sufferer, to suffer, suicidal, to*

hurt); harmful inclinations (*alcohol, drugs, smoking, to drink*); subjects treating diseases (*doctor, diet*); victims of ailments (*women, people*); subjects who empathize with the sick (*friends, family*).

The meaning of the words that implement the concept of "ILLNESS" reflects, as a rule, the negative experience of women. A sharply negative evaluation is assigned to words that call:

– diseases, cf.:

§ Although I weigh 16 st, I could relate to the women in your article 'Anorexia: not just for teens' (October issue) – it was the equal and opposite of my situation. Anorexia is a visible disease, just like obesity. – "Fat is a fraught issue" [Marie Claire 2003: № 11];

§ Thank you for broaching the subject of skin cancer ('Soon after these photos were taken, Ann died of skin cancer', June issue), in particular malignant melanoma, which can be so devastating. – "More than skin deep" [Marie Claire 2002: № 9].

– inclinations, cf.:

§ On behalf of A&E doctors, thank you for 'It all started with a glass of chardonnay' (September issue). Weekends are nightmare for us, due to the hundreds of drunk people who fall from the pub into an ambulance. – "Letter of the month" [Marie Claire 2002: № 12];

§ I found your 'Faces Of Addiction' photos shocking. What a sad downward spiral they show for the drug users profiled. – "Our drug addict mugshots horrified you" [Marie Claire 2011: № 11].

A negative connotation was also attached to the word *doctor*, cf.:

§ When my doctor began to show concern, I knew I had gone too far, but breaking the starvation cycle was difficult. – "Letter of the month" [Marie Claire 2003: № 11];

§ I've just read 'This boy weighed 15 stone aged 10. Are we to blame?' (November issue) and felt compelled to write. My sister is sixteen and is now a size 26. We've seen doctors, but they just say she'll grow out of it. We've also tried dieticians, who have put her on eating plans and exercise regimes, but they didn't achieve anything. – "The big issue" [Marie Claire 2002: № 1].

The word *weight* expresses both positive and negative attitudes of women towards the concepts they denote, cf.:

§ Since gaining a lot of weight, I've found that people are not interested in me: I feel either invisible or that others just see my size. What they don't know is why I am this way. (negative connotation) – "Fat is a fraught issue" [Marie Claire 2003: № 11];

§ I'm in my twenties and have had been living with anorexia since I was seventeen. At one point, I was a walking skeleton, but through the help of a friend, have managed to turn my life around and get back to a healthy weight. (positive connotation) – "Eating me up" [Marie Claire 2003: № 11].

The meaning of the keywords, with the help of which the concept "HEALTH" is realized, demonstrates the positive attitude of the readers to the promoted image of the "healthy woman". These include words that express:

– a positive evaluation of the called concept (*health*) or sign (*fit, healthy, great*), cf.:

§ Now life is getting back on a track and being healthy again is great. "Precious reminder" [Marie Claire 2002: № 5];

§ I've recently started subscribing to Zest as I've enjoyed your magazine for some time and have found it's really inspired me to get fit. A year and a half ago, encouraged by Zest to be healthy, I gave up smoking and started going to the gym, partly as a hobby, but also as a way to stay slim. – "Subscriber for life" [Zest 2006: № 12];

§ I have been a regular reader of Zest for many years and have found that it inspires and motivates me to stay fit and healthy. – "Smoothing the way" [Zest 2006: № 12];

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§ Danielle Hine has inspired me town up to my dieting crimes at my next slimming club weigh-in, where my 'I'm so bloated with water retention,' or 'This new gel bra seems to be weighting me down' excuses are wearing really thin. – "Mail of the month" [Marie Claire 2011: № 11];

§ Both my mother and maternal grandmother had premenopausal cancer and both needed mastectomies. Thankfully, they fully recovered but still have to have six-monthly checks to ensure it hasn't returned. – "Letter of the month" [Marie Claire 2002: № 12].

The words *food* and *diet* express both positive and negative attitudes of women towards the concepts they denote, cf.:

§ The Truth About Women and Food (October 2006), which revealed that women think about food every 15 minutes, really hit home! I do think about food a lot and, after completing the quiz, I realized that some aspects of my attitude towards it are unhealthy (negative connotation) – "Food for thought" [Zest 2006: № 12];

§ More recently, I found your article 100 Star Foods For Super health (February 2007) really interesting, as I'm keen to eat a better diet and know the health benefits of specific foods (positive connotation) – "Subscribing for life" [Zest 2007: № 4];

§ For at least two years I have been meaning to lose just under a stone - but I just kept putting off the dreaded diet and exercise regime (negative connotation) – "Small changes" [Zest 2006: № 12];

§ I love the broad range of health and diet features in Zest and it was great to see your 10 On Test on cheese in the October issue (positive connotation) – "Say cheese!" [Zest 2007: № 12];

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Conclusion

The system-forming factor in the reader's responses is its cumulative systemic quality "evaluativity", which is realized in the cognitive-reflective and communicative-emotional aspects of evaluative relations. Cognitive-reflective evaluative relations form the subject basis of the content system of readers' responses. In the article, it was presented in images of reflected reality ("images of femininity"). In total, nine "images of femininity" were identified, each of which had a certain conceptual and lexical heterogeneity. The given example of the "Healthy Woman" image explicates the need to consider each "image of femininity" as a conceptual field with a relatively stable linguistic expression.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Рецензия

Все статьи проходят рецензирование. Но рецензент или автор статьи предпочли не публиковать рецензию к этой статье в открытом доступе. Рецензия может быть предоставлена компетентным органам по запросу.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

Review

All articles are peer-reviewed. But the reviewer or the author of the article chose not to publish a review of this article in the public domain. The review can be provided to the competent authorities upon request.

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