

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2021.28.4.43>**МУЛЬТИМОДАЛЬНАЯ МЕТАФОРА В «ТОРГОВОЙ ВОЙНЕ»**

Научная статья

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Аннотация

Настоящая статья посвящена рассмотрению функционирования мультимодальной метафоры в рамках политического дискурса СМИ. Образное представление окружающей реальности, использование различных ассоциаций, неизбежная дешифровка культурных кодов читателем вполне может способствовать реализации интенции автора. Расположение метафоры во вводной части текста влияет на восприятие дискурса: метафора «ведет» читателя. Когнитивные особенности метафоры позволяют автору вкладывать в дискурс особые значения, их оттенки и субъективные оценки, важные для понимания замысла текста. Вкупе с возможностями цифровых масс медиа использование метафоры предоставляет огромный потенциал для манипулирования массовым пользователем.

Ключевые слова: политический дискурс СМИ, мультимодальная метафоры, поликодовый текст.

MULTIMODAL METAPHORS IN A “TRADE WAR”

Research article

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Abstract

The following article is devoted to considering multimodal metaphors in the political media discourse. The figurative representation of the surrounding reality, the use of various associations, the inevitable deciphering of cultural codes by the reader may well contribute to the realization of author's intentions. Placing a metaphor in the introductory part of a text influences the discourse perception: metaphors route the reader. Cognitive peculiarities of metaphors let the author attach the meanings, implications and evaluations essential to the perception of the discourse idea. Together with the capabilities of digital mass media, use of metaphors gives huge potential for mass reader manipulation.

Keywords: political media discourse, multimodal metaphor, multimodal text.

Introduction

Political discourse is a purposeful communication; its global aim is to struggle for power. Modern political media discourse enjoys an abundance of technical and technological opportunities to achieve the defined global aim. Internet editions highlight political issues in a specific way using semiotically diverse levels of text production. This paper is focused on the synergetic effect occurring when the verbal and non-verbal layers of the discourse effectively interact. This cooperative phenomenon enables the communicants to implement their intention which involves strategy deployment on the cognitive level of text production [1]. This policy is manifested via different semiotic modes in the context of political internet-mediated communication. It is namely this strategy that immediately defines the choice of verbal and non-verbal components of a multimodal text, that is a heterogeneous text comprised of elements belonging to various sign modes. “Mode is a socially shaped and culturally given semiotic resource for making meaning” [2, P.79]. A multimodal text should not be considered as a mere sum of the components making it up. It is more likely a purposeful unity of closely interacting constituents [3].

Research methods and principles

The bulk of the research included 76 articles in Russian and in English reflecting a wide range of political opinions and beliefs. The publications present media discourse focused on one issue — relations between Russia, China and the United States on the background of “trade war” and sanctions against Huawei company. The heading complex of such texts contains not only the title, subtitle and lead, but also illustrative material: photographs, drawings, caricatures, collages. A journalistic text is known to be structured according to the principle of the “inverted pyramid”: the most important role is granted to the introductory part of an article. Meanwhile, there are certain “champions” in catching the reader’s attention in the heading complex. The first thing a reader sees is the title. It is the most outstanding part of an article, it is a signal that attracts attention. After perceiving the title communicants pay attention to the picture accompanying the text. That is why the connection between the text and the picture is so important [4]. Tackling the issue we discovered a multimodal metaphor in the introductory part of some texts.

A metaphor is an old-line notion with no less multifaceted perspectives. Commonly this term is defined as a trope or speech mechanism consisting in the use of a word denoting a certain class of objects, phenomena, etc., to characterize or name an object belonging to another class, or to name another class of objects similar to that in relation [5]. The development of political linguistics and cognitive sciences called forth the definition of the metaphor as the main mental operation that combines two conceptual spheres and creates the opportunity to use the potentials of structuring the source sphere in the conceptualization of a new sphere [6]. Accordingly, the “envelope” of the metaphor may be made not only of the verbal layer but of non-verbal elements. Ch. Forceville says that the target and source of multimodal metaphors are represented exclusively

or predominantly in different modes [7, p.384]. In this paper we considered a combination of verbal and visual modes in the realization of metaphors. The empirical material gave 27% of multimodal metaphors in the heading complex and a couple of instances are demonstrated onwards.

Main results

A noteworthy example was found on the Fox News portal. The article is illustrated with a picture of a child playing with a huge soap bubble against a neon Huawei logo (see fig. 1) [8]. It is easy to guess what is the finale of this amusement. “Burst someone’s bubble” is defined as “informal : to cause someone to suddenly realize that something believed, trusted, or admired is not really true, good, etc.” [9] That means that the object used to have a perfect image but due to some outer factors it turned out to look in a different way. The multimodal metaphor operates the things familiar to every person and transmits the results of the game to the world of large companies and political decisions.



Fig. 1 – A multimodal metaphor

The article focuses on the difficulties that Google may face because of the sanctions against the Chinese tech giant since these companies had close cooperation: “U.S. companies that supply the Chinese tech powerhouse with computer chips saw their stock prices slump Monday, and Huawei faces decimated smartphone sales with the anticipated loss of Google's popular software and services”. The verbalization of the main idea of the text in the lead attracts attention. “To slump” is defined as “to go into a marked or sustained decline especially in economic activity or prices”, whereas “to decimate” is “to destroy a large number of (plants, animals, people, etc.); to severely damage or destroy a large part of (something)” [9]. The problems of US companies are described in economic terms, the problems of the Chinese company are depicted in military shades. On the whole the pitiful tone of the publication makes it clear that Huawei is in trouble: “Huawei is the No. 2 global smartphone brand by sales volume behind South Korea's Samsung. Industry analysts say it might struggle to compete if it cannot line up replacements for Google services that run afoul of the U.S. curbs”. And the readers suddenly realize that the big company is vulnerable.

Another instance is taken from an economic magazine. The article titled “Какие компании оказались в зоне риска из-за торговой войны” is supplied with experts’ points of view but the political colouring of the publication can be easily revealed. A militaristic metaphor is expressed by a collage (see fig. 2) [10]. This metaphor is certainly less delicate than the first example but it is unambiguous and definite. The collage eloquently indicates the confrontation between the United States and China. The preposition vs. (versus — “in contrast to or as the alternative of” [9]) is placed on the background of two national flags, moreover, caricature tanks are aimed at each other.

Какие компании оказались в зоне риска из-за торговой войны



Fig. 2 – A multimodal metaphor

In general, the article uses a metaphorical description of events as military operations. The subtitle is marked in bold: «Торговая война между США и Китаем оказала негативное влияние на оценку перспектив мировой экономики и на настроение инвесторов». The militaristic metaphor tightly coheres the entire text and manifests itself in verbal («война», «жертва», «лидерство», «взаимные удары») and visual means.

Conclusion

Employing metaphors in the heading complex of a publication gives the intended direction to the text comprehension. The reader is ready to perceive the subsequent facts through the prism of comparisons, associations, allusions. Online publication under consideration supplied our research with striking examples of the synergistic effect of manipulative tools from various semiotic systems within a digital text. Multimodal metaphors route the reader's perception from the very first glance at the publication.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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