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FUNCTIONAL AND STYLISTIC FEATURES OF THE VERBAL REALIZATION OF COGNITIVE DISSONANCE IN THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWS TELEVISION MEDIA DISCOURSE (AND ITS COMMENTS)

Abstract. The article is devoted to the problem of identifying the functional and stylistic features of the verbal realization of cognitive dissonance on the material of the English-language news television media discourse (using the example of "Sky News"), and through the comments left under the video on the official YouTube channel. The paper considers the characteristic features of cognitive dissonance, provides examples of the use of stylistic devices used by recipients of information to express cognitive dissonance, and analyzes their role as an indicator of cognitive dissonance. For example, with the help of irony, recipients of information can express cognitive dissonance. On the basis of the study, the authors propose their interpretation of the problem of identifying the functional and stylistic features of the manifestation of cognitive dissonance. In the process of work, the following methods have been used: discourse analysis, content analysis and functional-stylistic analysis. As a result of the study, the following goals have been achieved: identifying cases of cognitive dissonance using stylistic devices, analyzing media discourse and comments.

Key words: cognitive dissonance, media discourse, stylistic device, commentary, contradiction.

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АҒЫЛШЫН ТІЛІНДЕГІ АҚПАРАТТЫҚ ТЕЛЕДИДАРЛЫҚ ДИСКУРСТАҒЫ (ЖӘНЕ КОММЕНТАРИЙЛЕРДЕГІ) КОГНИТИВТІ ДИССОНАНСТЫҢ ВЕРБАЛДЫ ЖҮЗЕГЕ АСУЫНЫҢ ФУНКЦИОНАЛДЫҚ ЖӘНЕ СТИЛИСТИКАЛЫҚ ЕРЕКШЕЛІКТЕРІ

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақала ағылшын тіліндегі ақпараттық телемедиа дискурс материалында («Sky News» мысалын пайдалана отырып) және YouTube ресми арнасында бейне астында қалдырылған пікірлер арқылы когнитивті диссонанстың вербалды жүзеге асуының функционалдық және стилистикалық ерекшеліктерін анықтау мәселесіне арналған. Мақалада когнитивті диссонанстың тән белгілері қарастырылып, оны білдіру үшін ақпаратты қабылдаушылардың қолданатын стилистикалық құралдарын пайдалану мысалдары келтірілген және олардың когнитивті диссонанстың көрсеткіші ретіндегі рөлі талданған. Мысалы, иронияның көмегімен ақпарат алушы когнитивтік диссонансты көрсете алады. Зерттеу негізінде авторлар когнитивті диссонанс көрінісінің функционалдық және стилистикалық ерекшеліктерін анықтау мәселесін түсіндіруді ұсынылады. Жұмыс барысында келесі әдістер қолданылды: дискурстық талдау, мазмұнды талдау және функционалдық-стилистикалық талдау. Зерттеу нәтижесінде келесі мақсаттарға қол жеткізілді: стилистикалық құралдарды пайдалана отырып, когнитивтік диссонанс жағдайларын анықтау, медиа дискурс пен комментарийлерді талдау.

Кілт сөздер: когнитивтік диссонанс, медиа дискурс, стилистикалық құрал, комментарий, қайшылық.

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ФУНКЦИОНАЛЬНО-СТИЛИСТИЧЕСКИЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ ВЕРБАЛЬНОЙ РЕАЛИЗАЦИИ КОГНИТИВНОГО ДИССОНАНСА В АНГЛОЯЗЫЧНОМ НОВОСТНОМ ТЕЛЕВИЗИОННОМ МЕДИА ДИСКУРСЕ (И КОММЕНТАРИЯХ К НЕМУ)

Аннотация. Данная статья посвящена проблеме выявления функционально-стилистических особенностей вербальной реализации когнитивного диссонанса на материале англоязычного новостного телевизионного медиа дискурса (на примере «Sky News»), и посредством комментариев, оставленных под видео на официальном YouTube канале. В работе рассмотрены характерные особенности когнитивного диссонанса, приведены примеры использования стилистических приемов, используемых реципиентами информации для выражения когнитивного диссонанса, проанализирована их роль в качестве показателя когнитивного диссонанса. Например, реципиенты информации могут выражать когнитивный диссонанс при помощи иронии. На основе проведенного исследования авторами предлагается трактовка проблемы выявления функционально-стилистических особенностей проявления когнитивного диссонанса. В процессе работы применялись следующие методы: дискурс-анализ, контент анализ и функционально-стилистический анализ. В результате исследования были достигнуты следующие цели: выявление случаев возникновения когнитивного диссонанса при помощи стилистических приемов, анализ медиа дискурса и комментариев.

Ключевые слова: когнитивный диссонанс, медиа дискурс, стилистический прием, комментарий, противоречие.

Introduction

A modern individual is exposed to a substantial volume of new information on a daily basis, particularly in the current era, where virtually everyone possesses a smartphone. Despite numerous discussions regarding the potential negative effects of prolonged phone usage, individuals habitually check news feeds on social media platforms or messages in instant messaging applications. Frequently, newly encountered information is not readily or easily comprehended; rather, it often elicits conflicting emotions in the recipient. This, in turn, can contribute to the development of cognitive dissonance. Consequently, given our continuous access to new information, it can be inferred that individuals may experience cognitive dissonance multiple times throughout the day, to varying degrees.

One of the most common sources of information today is television news media discourse, which many consumers prefer to access online at their convenience. The components of television news media discourse typically include news reports, interviews, and expert opinions. As a result, situations involving cognitive dissonance may arise both among participants in the media discourse and within the target audience.

It is widely recognized that one of the key features of the internet is the ability to comment, allowing recipients to verbally express their reactions to information at any time following its publication. These comments are accessible not only to the original author of the media discourse but also to other users, who may in turn respond to them if they so wish. Accordingly, it can be assumed that, in reacting to media discourse, users may verbally express cognitive dissonance through the use of various expressive means.

Expressive means and stylistic devices have long been employed by authors to convey emotions. These devices add imagery and enrich speech, enabling speakers to more precisely communicate the emotional states elicited by certain information. For instance, a metaphor can highlight similarities by comparing one concept to another, repetition can draw attention to the author's central idea, and an ellipsis may indicate an incomplete or deliberately withheld thought.

A significant contribution to the development of stylistics was made by the Swiss linguist Charles Bally, a student of the renowned Ferdinand de Saussure. Charles Bally offers the following definition of stylistics: "Stylistics studies the emotional expression of elements of the language system, as well as the interaction of speech phenomena that contribute to the formation of a system of expressive means in a given language" (Bally, 2009: 17).

In addition to the distinctions between language and speech introduced by his teacher F. de Saussure, Bally introduced the concept of colloquial language and sought to incorporate extralinguistic parameters into linguistic research. Thus, according to E. O. Oparina, "the study and analysis of language involves not only a description of the relationships among elements of the linguistic system, but also an examination of the interrelations between speech and the communicative situation, as well as between speech and cognitive processes. In this context, Bally understands the speaker's consciousness and the content of their cognitive processes as a complex that includes both logical and emotional elements. Bally emphasizes the importance of the emotional dimension of language and speech—he opposes both excessive logical positivism in linguistics and the overemphasis on the analysis of isolated forms, in which words and expressions are broken down into roots, suffixes, prefixes, and other elementary components solely for etymological or formal analysis" (Oparina, 2001).

Furthermore, Bally draws attention to the influence of social factors—such as profession, environment, and social practices—on the stylistic coloring of speech. That is, even a highly educated individual may not be familiar with the meaning of every word in the dictionary (Bally, 2009). For example, it is evident that, in most cases, a non-specialist will struggle to understand professional terminology, which in turn may lead to cognitive dissonance, as something previously familiar may acquire a new and different meaning in a specialized context.

Material and methods of research

The term "cognitive dissonance" was introduced into academic discourse by American social psychologist Leon Festinger. According to Festinger, cognitive dissonance refers to "...the existence

of non-fitting relations among cognitions within a cognitive system... Cognitive dissonance can be understood as a state that motivates actions aimed at reducing it” (Festinger, 2018: 20). Thus, cognitive dissonance may arise when newly acquired information contradicts what was previously known. In an effort to resolve this dissonance, individuals either attempt to adapt their knowledge or beliefs to align with the new situation or choose to disregard the new information in order to maintain their original perspective (Festinger, 2018).

The material for this study comprises English-language television news media discourse and the accompanying user comments, as these comments serve as a platform through which recipients may articulate views that dissonate with those expressed in the original media discourse. For the authors of the media discourse, these comments reflect the recipients’ responses to their work. For example, in her article "Internet Comments and Online Reviews: Parameters of Genre Distinction," E. Ch. Dakhalayeva writes: “...internet comments contribute to the continuity and interactivity of online communication. They allow internet users to express their opinions and viewpoints in response to any given stimulus in the modern web space (the post could be a news item, video, audio, or any other verbal or non-verbal content). The primary value of a comment lies in the opportunity it provides users to deliver either a detailed or concise evaluation of the post, clarify unclear points, or express agreement or disagreement with the author of the original post” (Dakhalayeva, 2014).

Accordingly, the examination of media discourse together with the discourse of user comments is viewed in this study as one of the most effective methods for identifying instances of cognitive dissonance. Through the analysis of comments, it becomes possible to observe what specifically triggered the dissonance, how it is expressed linguistically, and, when applicable, how other users respond to it.

The following methods were employed in this research: discourse analysis, content analysis, and functional-stylistic analysis.

Professor Norman Fairclough defines discourse as “a social practice that creates social identities, social relationships, and systems of knowledge and meaning in the social world... [which] simultaneously reflects and constitutes ideas and assumptions about the ways in which personal identity, social relationships, and knowledge systems are shaped by social practices” (Nielson, 2009: 204). Since the focus of this research lies in the functional and stylistic features of the verbal expression of cognitive dissonance, it is essential to consider the discourse in which dissonance emerges. In this case, discourse analysis enabled the identification of linguistic features within television news media discourse that either trigger or serve as vehicles for the expression of cognitive dissonance.

The second method employed was content analysis. As Professor Klaus Krippendorff notes, “content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff, 2018). Since the news reports analyzed were primarily available in video or audio format, or as subtitles, full transcripts were manually produced and cross-referenced with the visual and textual content. A selection of media discourses was made, focusing on those which, in our view, contained contradictory ideas likely to provoke cognitive dissonance in the audience. Instances of dissonance were identified in viewer comments posted beneath the videos on the official YouTube channels of the news programs under examination.

The functional-stylistic analysis method was used to identify the distinctive characteristics of television news media discourse, particularly the stylistically marked linguistic elements that could evoke contradictory reactions or explicitly express dissonance.

Media discourse typically features a combination of expressive and conventional communicative elements, as well as specialized terminology. It blends traits from official, scientific, and artistic styles. This convergence of linguistic elements associated with multiple functional registers may lead to confusion for the reader. Another characteristic feature of media discourse is its duality: on the one hand, it is subject to constant renewal, while on the other, it remains committed to fixed forms of expression (Dobrosklonskaya, 2006)-a contradiction in itself.

Therefore, it can be concluded that, despite its aim for neutrality, media discourse does include stylistic devices such as irony, antithesis, and quotation. This raises the question: how can a form of discourse designed to be widely accessible contain elements that provoke misunderstanding or contradiction? The answer lies in the fact that media discourses are both produced and interpreted by individuals with diverse perspectives, experiences, and worldviews, even if they share a common linguistic background. People use different words and stylistic techniques, which regularly gives rise to situations that result in cognitive dissonance.

Result and discussion

Turning to specific examples, the media discourse of “Sky News” correspondent Tom Clarke in the report titled “Could gene-edited crops mean healthier food around the world?”, in which the journalist poses the question: “Can gene-edited crops provide healthier food globally?” The report presents scientific developments, including the creation of a tomato variety with an increased level of vitamin D (Clarke, 2022).

Tom Clarke: “They don’t look any different to ordinary tomatoes which is very much the point, but these have been genetically edited to produce high levels of vitamin D. Normal tomatoes, like most fruit and vegetables, contain virtually none, but just one of these has as much vitamin D as two eggs or a serving of tuna.” (Clarke, 2022). We observe the use of the stylistic device simile: “just one of these has as much vitamin D as two eggs or a serving of tuna.”

Tomatoes have traditionally not been included in the list of foods recommended for vitamin D intake; such lists typically feature fish, eggs, fortified orange juice, and similar items (The Nutrition Source. Vitamin D, 2023). The notion that tomatoes may now contain levels of vitamin D comparable to those found in fish or eggs challenges conventional dietary knowledge. Consequently, this juxtaposition of the familiar with the unfamiliar-introduced through a simile-may give rise to a state of cognitive dissonance in recipients of the information.

This psychological response is exemplified in the following comment posted by a viewer:

Organised Olive: “I’ll pass, thanks”. (Clarke, 2022)

Although concise, this remark clearly signals a rejection of the information presented in the media discourse. It illustrates a classic response to cognitive dissonance: rather than adjusting existing beliefs or knowledge, the recipient opts to dismiss the new, contradictory information in order to preserve cognitive equilibrium.

The recipient's verbal response-expressed in the form of a sarcastic remark-demonstrates that they are experiencing cognitive dissonance and perceive only the negative aspects of gene-edited crops. The stylistic use of sarcasm serves to convey the individual's inner conflict and highlights the presence of contradictory elements within their cognitive system-specifically, the opposition between the concepts of “gene-edited crops” and “healthy food”.

Moreover, within the media discourse itself, we find the use of metaphor by Professor Cathie Martin, a plant metabolic engineer and one of the lead researchers in the study:

Professor Cathie Martin, Plant Metabolic Engineer, John Innes Centre: “We talk about genetic tweezers so it (gene editing technique) really is very, very small nature equivalence. It can happen naturally or could happen naturally, but the amount of work and time required to make that change and to select it and breed it in is prohibitively long.” (Clarke, 2022)

The metaphor of “genetic tweezers” refers to the gene-editing technology that underpins the research team's work. Let us examine how this metaphor functions.

To begin, we consider the definition of the word “tweezers”: “Tweezers – a small instrument consisting of two narrow pieces of metal joined at one end, used for picking up small objects, often used in medicine or technical fields. For example: to extract a splinter with tweezers” (Fundamental Electronic Library).

This dictionary example evokes the image of removing something unnecessary, harmful, or painful. By analogy, the researcher compares gene-editing technology to tweezers because it allows scientists to make precise changes, eliminate harmful elements, and improve the original organism-thus portraying the technology as highly beneficial.

Professor Martin emphasizes that her team was able to introduce something new and useful into the original product, in a way that mirrors nature itself. However, unlike natural evolution, they achieved the desired outcome within a much shorter time frame.

At first glance, the metaphor “genetic tweezers” fulfills its intended purpose: it presents the gene-editing method in a favorable light and evokes a positive, advantageous image. However, at the same time, the metaphor-proposed by the specialist-implies that certain manipulations are being conducted within a natural process. This raises the question of why it was necessary to modify tomatoes in the first place, especially when other food products naturally rich in vitamin D could serve the same purpose. Such reflections can easily lead to cognitive dissonance. One possible explanation is that gene-edited tomatoes might be more affordable than other foods rich in vitamin D.

Nevertheless, the following comment suggests that gene-edited products, after undergoing all necessary research and development, may end up being:

Top Gunna Boy: “And 10 times more expensive than regular tomatoes” (Clarke, 2022).

The commenter employs hyperbole (“10 times more expensive”) to express the view that the price of such products for the end consumer would be excessively high. The author of the comment appears puzzled and possibly questions the value of such an “improvement.”

Subsequently, we observe another user attempting to reduce the dissonance expressed by the previous commenter:

Lilia: “Maybe at first, but once it becomes more and more common, prices should then go down some. We’re seeing it with stuff like dairy substitutes” (Clarke, 2022).

Here, the commenter seeks to justify her opposing viewpoint by arguing that as the product gains popularity, its price is likely to decrease due to higher demand and the emergence of competing producers. As an example, she refers to the case of plant-based milk substitutes, which gained popularity in the 1990s and later became widely accepted by mainstream consumers (Berenstein, 2019). It is possible that this comment helped reduce the cognitive dissonance experienced by other users, as evidenced by the two “likes” it had received at the time this material was prepared.

Overall, when a recipient of media discourse interacts with an antithesis—a rhetorical contrast of ideas presented through parallel linguistic structures (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)—as seen in the headline “Could gene-edited crops mean healthier food around the world?”, cognitive dissonance may emerge between the discourse and the recipient’s cognitive framework. In conventional public understanding, genetically modified products tend to evoke negative associations. There is a prevailing belief that the consumption of genetically modified foods is potentially unsafe. Upon reading or hearing the title of the media report, the audience may immediately associate it with genetically modified foods that ripen faster, have longer shelf lives, and are visually appealing—but which might carry unknown or adverse long-term effects.

The following comments illustrate a higher degree of cognitive dissonance, expressed through more emotionally charged language and stylistic devices. This indicates deeper reflection on the issues raised in the media discourse and, consequently, a more intense experience of dissonance.

Pit Tuk: “‘Could gene-edited crops mean healthier food around the world?’ – the answer is Yes! However, it is also Yes! to this question: ‘Could gene-edited crops mean Armageddon?’” (Clarke, 2022).

In this comment, the user employs stylistic repetition. Responding to the question posed in the headline, the commenter affirms it enthusiastically and then introduces a rephrased, dramatically opposing version of the same question—also affirming it. This structure highlights the idea that gene-edited crops might not only offer benefits but also pose catastrophic risks—an implicit allusion to the apocalyptic term “Armageddon”. The exaggerated duality reveals the commenter’s perception of both potential and threat.

Red Pilled Marine: “Healthier crops, Sicker humans.....” (Clarke, 2022).

This comment employs several stylistic devices simultaneously: parallelism, antithesis, and irony. The structure relies on repeated syntactic patterns (“Healthier... Sicker...”), juxtaposing

contrasting ideas-improved crops and deteriorating human health-thus establishing an antithetical contrast. The ironic tone suggests skepticism toward claims of health benefits, implying that technological advances in agriculture may paradoxically harm the very consumers they aim to help. The logic expressed in the comment encapsulates the mechanism of cognitive dissonance: agricultural produce, traditionally associated with nourishment and well-being, is now seen as potentially harmful due to industrial and genetic modification processes. This conflict between familiar concepts and new information gives rise to mental discomfort and mistrust.

The highest level of dissonance is reflected in the following, emotionally charged and linguistically aggressive comment:

ÉO'S: "Leave our food alone ye control freaks" (Clarke, 2022).

This utterance begins with the imperative verb "leave", signaling an urgent demand. The colloquial use of "ye" (a variant of "you") adds a confrontational tone, signaling disdain toward scientists and those involved in gene-editing initiatives. According to O. V. Epstein's definition of a menacing speech act "a communicative-pragmatic class of utterances characterized by a dominant semantic component of threat" (Epstein, 2008), this statement can be classified as containing menacing features. Furthermore, the use of invective language, specifically "control freaks", reflects the user's categorical rejection of both the scientists' actions and the underlying assumptions of the media discourse. The cognitive dissonance experienced by the commenter is so intense that it manifests in a harsh, emotionally expressive form of verbal protest.

In general, the audience's reactions reflect a conflicted reception of the media discourse, indicating a discrepancy between the information presented and the knowledge or beliefs embedded in their cognitive systems. One may assume that by posing the title of the segment as a question-"Could gene-edited crops mean healthier food around the world?"-the journalist himself expresses uncertainty, thereby inviting skepticism and provoking cognitive dissonance in the audience. The interrogative format encourages viewers to question both the scientific claims and their own assumptions, intensifying internal conflict and public debate.

Conclusion

Although the style of journalistic writing is traditionally neutral, authors-both professionals (journalists) and amateurs (commentators)-frequently employ stylistic devices to enhance the imagery of their speech, attract attention, and express their viewpoints more vividly.

Further investigation into the identification of cognitive dissonance through stylistic means within media discourse appears to be a relevant and timely endeavor. Such research may enable both content creators and audiences to reduce the frequency and intensity of dissonant responses. This is particularly evident in the case of the metaphor "genetic tweezers" (Clarke, 2022). From the scientist's perspective, this comparison was intended to clarify the gene-editing process for those without a scientific background. However, the metaphor-like the topic of genetically edited crops in general-was not received by the public as positively as Professor Martin might have hoped. Many commenters disagreed with the metaphor and reported a sense of cognitive dissonance.

As this analysis has demonstrated, certain stylistic devices are especially effective in conveying dissonance-most notably irony, antithesis, and metaphor. The cases of cognitive dissonance identified and verbalized through such rhetorical techniques offer insight into how similar situations may be mitigated in the future. The subject under discussion-gene-edited food-still generates public controversy and remains misaligned with conventional perceptions and expectations. Nevertheless, as one commenter noted, public attitudes may shift over time, as has occurred with other innovations (e.g., dairy substitutes).

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THE COMPARISON OF CASES IN KAZAKH AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES

Abstract. This peer-reviewed article illustrates the comparative analysis of cases in both: English and Kazakh languages. Moreover, to expand the containing information about Kazakh language, we use Turkish, in order to compare Turkic Languages and see the interesting similarities. Since, Kazakh is agglutinative language(which mean that it uses affixes); it has a broader number of case system, while English is analytic language(which states for the use of auxiliary verbs, word order, prepositions); it uses syntax to distinguish case differences. Via descriptivism and contrastivism, we analyze morpho-syntactic behaviour of case in two languages. The results show that Kazakh describes grammatical relationships through morphological case suffixes, which allows flexible word order, while English applies fixed and specific word order/prepositions. This contrast not only highlights typological differences, but also provides an opportunity and information for learning a second language, studying language translation and the theory of morphosyntax. Moreover, this study highlights the influence of information structure and discursive context on case distribution, especially in the Kazakh language.

Keywords: grammatical case, comparative linguistics, agglutinative language, analytic language, morphosyntax, suffixation, differential subject marking, possessive constructions, morphological marking, inflection.

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ҚАЗАҚ ЖӘНЕ АҒЫЛШЫН ТІЛДЕРІНДЕГІ СЕПТІКТЕРДІҢ САЛЫСТЫРМАЛЫ ТАЛДАУЫ

Андатпа. Бұл рецензияланған мақалада ағылшын және қазақ тілдеріндегі септік жүйесі салыстырмалы түрде талданады. Қазақ тіліне қатысты мәліметтерді кеңейту мақсатында түрік тілі де қолданылады, бұл арқылы түркі тілдерін салыстырып, олардың қызықты ұқсастықтарын байқауға болады. Қазақ тілі агглютинативті тіл болғандықтан (яғни, жалғауларды қолданады), оның септік жүйесі кеңірек. Ал ағылшын тілі аналитикалық тіл болып табылады (яғни, көмекші етістіктерді, сөз тәртібін және предлогтарды қолданады), сондықтан ол септіктерді синтаксис арқылы ажыратады. Дескриптивизм мен контрастивизм әдістері арқылы біз екі тілдегі септіктердің морфосинтаксистік мінез-құлқын талдаймыз. Нәтижелер көрсеткендей, қазақ тілі грамматикалық қатынастарды морфологиялық септік жалғаулары арқылы білдіреді, бұл сөз тәртібінің