Linguistic means of informational manipulation in the context of Russia-Ukraine war

Kuzmych Oksana Anatoliivna¹

¹ candidate of pedagogical sciences, associate professor of Slavic philology and general linguistics department; Kyiv International University, Ukraine

Abstract. This article is dedicated to the investigation of manipulation influence upon the consciousness of a recipient of the speech with implicit content of information, expressed by linguistic means of language. Linguistic aspect of the scientific exploration anticipated analysis of stylistically marked language means of phonographic, lexical and morphological levels of language, which are able to provide verbal manipulation in the contemporary communication, their potential to transmit information implicitly, influencing cognitive, emotional and behavioral spheres of life-activity of recipient, creating illusion of self-made decisions and conclusions, especially in conditions of war.

Keywords: communication, linguistic means, informational manipulation, implicit information, phonographic means of language, lexical means of language, morphological means of language, stylistic abilities
Communication like any system formation is not possible without availability of arsenal of means, among which the verbal means of language coding are of great importance, by means of which certain information can be transmitted in two ways: explicitly or implicitly.

Depending on these or those communicative intentions of a speech sender implicit information can stimulate the recipient to decode a message through logical comparison, conclusions, reasoning, increasing thereby informational effectiveness, or latently, subconsciously for the recipient of the information, influence on his cognitive, emotional and behavioral spheres.

Ability of a speaker to express or transmit his or her communicative intentions properly by means of linguistic signs and capability of a recipient to decode and to perceive them are an important part of linguistic and stylistic competence of all participants of communication.

Verbal impact on a recipient is made by means of the sound arsenal of the language as well as due to usage of corresponding lexical and grammatical means, which are actually generally known as lexical and grammatical devices and expressive means, among which can be distinguished the following: choice of words and expressions, preferentially equal, but pragmatically belonging to different systems of values and world outlook; creating new words and expressions; choice of the best grammatical forms; choice of sequence in characteristic; stylistically coloured combinatorics of words; usage of discursive strategies of generalization, assertion; distraction; moralization; usage of positive estimating lexicon; strengthening of uniqueness and absolute advantages; transfer of characteristic of a part on the whole; mixing up related of corrective concepts, etc. [2, p.145-148].

At the phonetic level (in a broad sense of this concept) communicative and pragmatic influence on a recipient is implemented by means of such phonostylistic devices as phonaesthesia, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, sound reproduction, etc. Concentration of same or similar (according to particular criteria) sounds and their various combinations in these stylistic figures verbalizes thinking
process, creating peculiar phonosemantic pictures.

The main element of phonostylistic organization of poetic speech is regular and irregular sound repetition, due to which poetic texts acquire dynamism, expressiveness as well as in the context of the present war situation the meaningful, idea and emotional paradigm of Ukrainian spirit and valour are strengthened. Like in given passages from the poem without a title of, unfortunately, unknown 74-year-old resident of Luhanshchyna: "While in Moskau frogs were singing, Was flourishing our Kyyiv. Pity, Putin doesn't know it... On Ukraine he is encroaching. But at least one country'll stay, It's my Motherland Ukraine. Free and hardworking, Covered with blood dropping”.

Powerful pragmatic impact upon the consciousness of a reader has phonographic text organization, due to which any graphic sign, word or sentence acquires visual interpretation through specific position of textual unit in an image or an object. Thus, visual form of a text doesn’t only fix sound expression of a message, but also at the same time creates an aesthetic art product, which prompts a recipient to think, in order to realize, to see and synthesize all it into a unified image. In prose speech the phonosemantic potential of language means is not as strong as in poetry, nevertheless some devices of phonetic organization of a text can be singled out in it, this organization pragmatitically influences upon consciousness of a speech recipient, transferring information implicitly. Thus, for instance, in nowadays military reality in headlines of Internet messages mass media, which provoke negative emotions, back vowels occur more often: “Rosyska okupatsiinaarmia zakhopyla aeroport u Hostomeli” (Russian occupation army captured Hostomel airport” («ZAXID.NET», 24th of February 2022, 19:58), “Rosyska aviatsiia obstriliia Svijatohirsku lavru” (“Russian aviation raked Sviatohorsk Lavra”) («Vechirniy Kyyiv», 13th of March 2022, 10:38), and the trembling sonorant consonant r is prevailing, it intensifies semantic tension, serves as an additional means for expressing the highest level of anxiety, despair, pain and indignation at the same time. Associative potential of these implicit components sharpens auditory sensation of reality, creates suggestive images, which is
certainly fully implemented in the context only.

The implicit influence of information on the consciousness of a recipient is also realized by graphic means, in particular, it is about the variability of fonts and ways of graphic writing of words, punctuation marks, text segmentation tools, etc.

In modern military realities, the enemy shamefully violates the rules of information hygiene, trying to misinform the civilian population. To achieve this goal, fake informants use a powerful arsenal of expressive graphics, in particular, in our study we come across the replacement of font and density of a number of graphs (mostly in manipulative titles, which usually did not match the facts or content), on graphic signs-actualizers (exclamation marks, ticks, etc., for example: “100% info !!!”, “urgent repost!”, etc.) – all these, except for misinformation, undoubtedly attract attention, impose slow intonation, encourage the semantic selection of “necessary” info token, i.e. perform the function of subtextual transmission of emotional content of the message and are important in the system of expressing means of the text.

At the lexical and phraseological level of language, the most diverse types of influence in communication are carried out due to the semantic and stylistic potential of tokens and phrases. Despite the fact that any lexical unit, depending on the context and intentions of the author is a powerful tool for verbal influence, the stylistic potential of tokens is manifested through their numerous figurative and evaluative capabilities, in particular giving emotional colouring to expressions. Expressive vocabulary gives the expression more expressiveness, imagery, more noticeable effect on the feelings of the interlocutor, the reader. We are talking primarily about the book's sublime vocabulary (warrior, worthy); poetics (echo, life-giving); colloquial vocabulary (“rusnya” – russian soldiers, “zradophil” – a person, who betrays constantly) and vulgarisms: (“a scoundrel”, “a monster”, “a villain”).

Emotionally colored are often words that serve as synonyms for words that are stylistically and emotionally neutral: “prybichnyk” – “poplichnyk” (supporter), ity – shkandybaty

Influential pragmatic function is performed by lexical groups of words with expressive and emotional-evaluative connotations that bear semantic and pragmatic information. For example, the words: victory, happiness, joy, thirst, love, honor, native, beloved, tender, charming have positive emotional coloring. Sad mood can be inspired by the lexical meaning of such words as: war, pity, sadness, sorrow, yearning, separation. Negative emotions are provoked by abusive words and vulgarisms such as: a swindler, a fraudster, a lazy person, a rude person, a muzzle.

In particular, the stylistic function of synonyms is characterized by the fact that the denotative meaning is added to the emotional-expressive meaning. Thus, stylistic synonyms, which are more expressive for a certain feature, have a more “condensed” semantics than the relative neutral words. In speech, they can be used both to enhance emotionality and imagery, to emphasize certain nuances, to diversify the presentation, and sometimes to create a comic effect.

On the phenomenon of stylistic synonymy such implicit stylistic figure as periphrasis is formed, which performs not only nominative, text-forming functions, but also expressively evaluative and suggestive function, suggesting to the recipient positive, approving or negative, ironic perception of the described information (the river of ancestors – Dnipro, the Fourth Estate – Media, yellow and blue ones or ukrops (dills) – Ukrainians, blue party president – V. Yanukovych, bunker gnome – putin).

Among the manipulative lexical means on the Internet, E. Gorina identifies amoeba words [1, p. 15], whose aim is to create ambiguity: the recipient seems to understand what is being said, but he cannot understand the true meaning of the message, for example: “Victory or let’s have a sit and talk?” This is a so-called PR-move aimed at the target audience of social networks: first, this statement increases interest; secondly, the combination of semantically different words into one syntactic whole will inevitably provoke additional questions by the reader, so the user is manipulated by the
author of the post and he clicks on the link “read more”.

Phraseological means of the Ukrainian language, as well as its lexical composition, are stylistically differentiated. Note that phraseology in fiction, as well as in colloquial speech, is used very widely. And, if it is motivated stylistically, functionally, aesthetically, it is advisable to use any phraseological unit (idiom).

The focus of our research is phraseological units, which have stylistically influential features and are the basis of figurative, emotionally loaded speech. In particular, we are talking about conversational and everyday speech: be born and succeed; go where the eye can see; lie down on the job; folk poetical units: let the devil take him away; let our enemies cry; it did not turn out as expected; some book phraseological units, in particular journalistic ones: honorary duty, peaceful coexistence, cold war, people of good will, dot the i’s and cross the t’s; art styles: painful problems; measures of administrative influence; coefficient of performance (efficiency); relative importance (specific weight), etc.

Stylistic possibilities of word formation are identified in the comparison of words of the same root and the same meaning, but different in word-formation, i.e. in the synonymy of word-forming affixes that express the word, give it appropriate expression and, correspondingly, affect the recipient. For example, rarely used (unproductive) noun prefixes pra-, su- along with stylistically neutral meanings (“suzir’ya” - constellations, “pradid” - great-grandfather) emphasize the elevation of what is said, add to words solemn tone: “pramova” - protolanguage, “sugolossia” - unison, “sum’yattia” - confusion. Prefixes of foreign origin anti-, archi-, extra-, pseudo-, ultra-, ex- transmit a book tone: “antinarodnyy” - anti-people, “pseudo-patriot”, “archivazhlyyy”- very important, “expresident”.

negative coloring give contemptuous, ironic, satirical, humorous shades: “voyaksa” - warrior, “vorizhenky” - enemies.

The use or combined use of various units enhances the expressiveness and implicit influence: “vozhavkaty” - bark, “napliuvyzm” - spitting, “zradofilia” - betrayal.

The stylistic possibilities of morphological units manifest their expression in grammatical forms, categories, meanings of meaningfully changing words, limited and original - in unchanging meaningful words, as well as by means of the author's intentions. Each semantic-grammatical category of any independent part of language performs to some extent a functional load in the implementation of the pragmatic task of communication.

Within this aspect of the study, we will focus on the semantic and grammatical categories of those parts of speech with full meaning that have the strongest potential for the transmission of implicit content of information.

In particular, the expressive stylistic means of semantic and morphological categories of the noun are: the transition of proper names into common and vice versa (russia, putin, Heroes); use of abstract concepts in the meaning of specific nouns with symbolic meaning (Revolution, Maidan); combination of anthroponyms-abbreviations with Ukrainian patronyms and surnames, which creates a comic-sarcastic effect (KutsokinKim (Communist International of Youth) Svyrydovych).

In the morphological paradigm of manipulative means an important place is taken by the adjective, which specifies and expands meaning, in particular, of nouns, and enhances their implicit influence on a recipient. The vast majority of adjectives are used to describe, for example: domestic, effective, muscular.

The process of objectification of numerical names used in poetry, in propaganda journalism, can be perceived as a stylistic means of expressive selection of subject-numerical image, for example: “History has never probably been squeezed into such a bizarre tangle, the hearts of millions have never beaten in such an overstrain” (O. Dovzhenko).

More often, aiming at a higher level of personification, personal and possessive pronouns of the 1st and 2nd person singular or plural are used, it creates the illusion of the
speaker's presence and helps to establish contact between the sender and the recipient of the speech: “We believe in our Armed Forces! I choose, I trust”.

Manipulative influence on the recipient is also implemented by means of the polite traditional Ukrainian language form of the pronoun You, the use of which emphasizes respect for the recipient of speech and successfully helps to engage him in latent dialogue: “I hope for your help”. Definitive pronouns emphasize greater opportunities and have a suggestive effect on the recipient: “The entire territory of Ukraine will soon be free”.

Verbal vocabulary makes the text more dynamic, it also has a distinct manipulative character and a much greater inducing power than the other parts of speech. Verbs can serve as a means of implementing both rational and emotional influence strategies, which determines the feasibility of its use to optimize speech influence: worry, counteract, protect, defend, care, win.

The pragmatic value of using adverbs is to intensify and clarify some features. In particular, adverbs serve as a kind of compliments of adjectives, verbs and other adverbs; reinforce the names of signs, clarify, emphasize, turn them into expressive facts of speech, which has a significant stylistic effect: much more effective, to effect positive, quickly provides, hospitality in Ukrainian way.

Summing up, it should be noted that the influence of speech is a correlation of cultural, linguistic and psychological components. The most effective type of manipulative influence is verbal manipulation, which is skillfully implemented by a sender, who uses orally or in writing stylistically marked means, in particular, phonographic, lexical and morphological levels of language to influence latently the cognitive, emotional and behavioral spheres of life, creating illusion of self-made decisions and inferences.

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