Ethical aspects of the journalistic and advertising texts' analysis





Ethical aspects of the journalistic and advertising texts' analysis Aspectos éticos del análisis de textos periodísticos y publicitarios

ABSTRACT

Article is devoted to a problem of media texts (journalistic and advertising) compliance to ethical standards: to ethical standards of professional community and norms of media ethics. The research is conducted with the use of the "humanitarian expertise» principles and the semantic analysis method. In journalistic texts professional ethics standards violation is revealed. Advertising texts contain intended elocution violations. Non-compliance with ethical standards can be motivated by a divergence between them and other professional requirements to the journalistic and advertising text. In case of such divergences authors neglect requirements of ethics. The inattention reasons to ethical aspects of media texts: insufficiently accurate wording of ethical standards in Codes of professional ethics. Violations of professional ethics standards and language ethics demand discussion by professional community for improvement of professional standards and developing prevention mechanisms for such violations.

KEYWORDS: journalistic text, advertising text, professional ethics of journalists, conflict generating texts, language ethics.

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RESUMEN

El artículo está dedicado a un problema de los textos de los medios de comunicación (periodística y publicitaria) el cumplimiento de las normas éticas: a los estándares éticos de la comunidad profesional y las normas de ética de los medios. La investigación se realiza con el uso de los principios de "experiencia humanitaria" y el método de análisis semántico. En los textos periodísticos se revela la violación de las normas éticas profesionales. Los textos publicitarios contienen violaciones intencionadas de elocución. El incumplimiento de las normas éticas puede estar motivado por una divergencia entre ellos y otros requisitos profesionales para el texto periodístico y publicitario. En caso de tales divergencias, los autores descuidan los requisitos de ética. La falta de atención explica los aspectos éticos de los textos de los medios de comunicación: redacción insuficientemente precisa de las normas éticas en los Códigos de ética profesional. Las violaciones de los estándares éticos profesionales y la ética del lenguaje exigen la discusión por parte de la comunidad profesional para mejorar los estándares profesionales y desarrollar mecanismos de prevención para tales violaciones.

Palabras clave: texto periodístico, texto publicitario, ética profesional de los periodistas, textos generadores de conflictos, ética del lenguaje

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1. INTRODUCTION

The modern paradigm of mass media researches includes ethical aspect of the media texts analysis, both journalistic, and advertising, see: Cossack M. Y. (2012), Kozhemyakin E.A. (2010), Surikova T.I. (2009).

Professional activity of the journalist is regulated by the ethical standards developed by corporate community for preservation of public trust, establishment of social responsibility see: Clifford (2017), Frost (2015), Laitila (1995) Plaisance (2014). Formation of ethics as sciences in Russia is connected with names of D.S. Avraamov (2003), Y.V. Kazakova (2001), A.P. Korochensky (2003) and others. Now standards of professional activity of journalists are regulated by "The code of professional ethics of the Russian journalist" (1994) [The code of professional ethics of the Russian journalist, http]. Regulation is carried out also at the regional level: in February, 2007 "The Belgorod Region Journalist's Professional and Ethical Code" (author-originator is professor of Journalism Department of the Belgorod State National Research University A.P. Korochensky) was adopted. The basic principles of journalists' work, according to the document, are: social responsibility, high ethical culture, public trust, accuracy and reliability of publications. The clarity and definiteness of the formulated norms provides a possibility of their application as reference point and in journalists' work, and in the analysis of journalistic texts.

Professional activity of specialists in advertising is regulated, besides by the law "About Advertising", by the Russian Code of Practice for Advertising and Marketing Communications in which there is no concept "advertising ethics"; earlier it was treated as "compliance of form and content of an advertisement ... to rules of ethics, i.e. set of the standards of behavior, traditions and moral principles adopted in society". The existing Code specifies in the article 4 "Standard Principles of Morals and Morality" that "marketing communication should not contain any information ... the morals breaking the standard principles and morality [The Russian Code of practice of advertising and marketing communications, http]. In our opinion, the formulation has very generalized character that interferes with identification of similar violations and development of measures for their prevention.

Wide circulation of advertising and frequency violation in its texts of the standard norms (language and norms of ethics) draws attention of researchers, see: Drumwright (2009), Hyman (1994), Shabbir (2007), Zinkhan (1994), Bessarabova of N.D. (2011), Zavadskaya A.V. (2013), Polonsky A.V. (2010).

2.MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research materials are: the conflict generating journalistic texts widespread in the Belgorod region and involved in jurisprudence; the advertising texts not meeting literary standards. The analysis was carried out with use of the principles of "humanitarian expertise" [Shaykhitdinova, 2007] and a traditional method of the lexic-semantic analysis.

3.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The conflict generating texts are analyzed on compliance to the professional ethics standards stated in chapter "Our responsibility" of The Belgorod Region Journalist's Professional and Ethical Code and with a support on the principles of "humanitarian examination". Results of the analysis are systematized on the subjects designated in the Code: "State of emergency and crime", "Unchecked data", "Language aggression".

STATE OF EMERGENCY AND CRIME

In 2006 in three editions there were publications about death of the soldier during conscription service: "The resident of Belgorod shot himself after delivery of guard" (Komsomolskaya Pravda No. 23 29.03.2006), "What occurred in Naro-Fominsk?" (Meridian No. 13 28.03.2006), "Died of wound in heart" (Argumenty i Fakty No. 14 April, 2006). Journalists were mistaken, specifying service life, a cause of death and a name of the dead. The



last especially touched the soldier's mother who appealed to court; an ethical assessment was not given to texts. Meanwhile the professional and ethical code indicates the need of the attentive, careful, tactful attitude to relatives of the dead. Authors showed disrespect, having allowed facts violation.

The author who published in the Belgorodskaya Pravda newspaper (No. 72 20.05.2000; No. 73 23.05.2000; No. 74 24.05.2000) a cycle of materials under the general heading "You Are Guilty Because ... I Want So" (heading "Not Detective Story"), stated events from life of the young man, making an impression about his mental illness. Venomous hints, tendentious selection of the facts, categorical judgments and unreasonable conclusions were used: For teachers and schoolmates it was no secret that Vasya was not all right in the head. <...> Sometimeshet was attacked by such rage - eyes blood-shot, the face, hands flushed, and he instantly rushed into a fight. In a playful childish fight he flew into a rage at once and began to fight seriously. <...> Police officers ... were forced to carry out a psychiatric forensic medical examination of Vasily which conclusion was unambiguous schizophrenia.

The journalist did not make identification of the character impossible though the article was about sexual offense. The hero of the publication to whom criminals did heavy physical and moral damage also suffered from actions of the journalist who inconsiderately intruded into his private life. And the Belgorod ethical code directly warns: "Journalists should not identify the victims of sexual offenses or publish the materials promoting ... identification ... The information about the identity of the victim ... of sexual crimes should not be published without consent" [The Belgorod Region Journalist's Professional and Ethical Code, http].

The texts devoted to suicide subject demand correctness, care, pickiness in words and illustrations. Excess details are not necessary: they can "inspire suicide of other people". Besides, "it is necessary to hold special respect for the feelings of the suicide victim relatives" [The Belgorod Region Journalist's Professional and Ethical Code, http]. Identification of persons who committed suicide and their relatives is inadmissible.

These requirements were violated by the author of the Octopus program on air of Magnit TV company (23.02.2001). The journalist so hurried to report news that relatives learned about a suicide earlier, than they were informed by law enforcement officers - this is inadmissible. Haste led to the message of unchecked information, inconsiderate invasion into private life of family where there was a tragedy: ... If the girl, the heroine of our following story, would marry in time, perhaps, she would not begin to react to a joke of the friend so sharply. <...> the 20-year-old resident of Belgorod Taya Z ... (it is removed auth.) stepped from the 7th floor of the multi-storey building ... <...> Probably Taya who was on the 3rd month of pregnancy, jokes proved fatal, the prospect of being a single mother did not suit her ...

The name, surname, the photo of the deceased person appeared not only on air, but also on the website of shopping Mall Magnit: whether a suicide in Belgorod is a reason for a discussion "Did it became necessary to stay virgin till marriage?" (the Time program on TNT channel). Such "savoring" of details offended feelings of relatives of the deceased, and later they appealed to the court.

UNCHECKED DATA

It agrees to the Russian and Belgorod professional and ethical codes, the journalist is obliged to use data, "the reliability of which is established and buttressed up checked by facts". The professional and ethical code obliges the journalist to operate only with that information which source is known, avoiding references to anonymous sources. "The conjecture, opinions, guesses, the assumptions and rumors cannot be shown in the journalistic work as the facts or instead of them" [The Belgorod Region Journalist's Professional and Ethical Code, http]. However journalists quite often break these norms.

"Another game ... in "marked cards"" (The word of the communist No. 11 19.03.2003) presented information marked by "unauthenticity signals" (are highlighted by us in bold type): In the early nineties of the XX century, being at a position of the vice-chairman of the Belgorod regional executive committee on economy and trade, he "successfully sold" the automobile transport limited by the state and, it is said, traded on official position for

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what he was dismissed and was forced to leave area.

The same author of the publication "Portrait against the background" enters unchecked information (Dobrostroy 09.08.1997):

They say, in this story there was everything: both anonymous letters, and "scolding" of subordinates, and colliding of colleagues. <...> Rumors have it that GOKE created system in which a part of taxes is not paid to the budget of Russia but are persistently directed on sale of export revenue, and profit from such operations remains abroad. <...> Evil tongues claim that these accounts can be personal or controlled by Anatoly Timofeyevich.

In material "Portrait against the background" there are also other violations of ethical standards. In the text having sharp critical focus, the criticized person was called on a name and a position, its biographic data, etc. are specified. The hero was not given an opportunity to explain the position, to comment on criticism. The Belgorod ethical code includes such obligation: "If the person called by name ... is exposed to sharp criticism, then ... the journalist is obliged to receive explanations of the criticized party. In cases when the party criticized refused communication ... the audience has to be notified of it. Insubstantial accusations ... are inadmissible ..." [The Belgorod Region Journalist's Professional and Ethical Code, http]. In the analyzed case journalists neglected these requirements.

LANGUAGE AGGRESSION

The Belgorod Region Journalist's Professional and Ethical Code warns against groundless labeling, demands to respect the advantage, honor and reputation of citizens, their right for private life, to avoid undeserved insult or humiliation [The Belgorod Region Journalist's Professional and Ethical Code, http], however these requirements are violated often at the publication of letters.

In the letter "Let's not allow plundering the enterprise" (The Belgorod Pravda 06.02.1996) authors characterized the citizen, using lexemes the easy rider, the trickster, the unscrupulous subject who leeched the enterprise. The Valuyskaya Zvezda (02.11.2007) newspaper published the letter "Resting at the sea with "advantage"" where words the swindler, the rascal, the villain are used. The author of the publication "Cry from the heart" (Our life No. 58 12.07.2000) saw it possible to call the person the bastard; the text was published without updates.

The mass media's editorial office, according to Art. 42 of the Federal Law "About Media" [The Comment to the Act of the Russian Federation on Media, 2002, page 242], should not make the change distorting sense in author's works by readers. But the right to freedom of speech in this case has to be coordinated with the rights of heroes of publications for a good name, reputation and not to contradict the principles of ethics and morals. According to us, offensive words have to be excluded from the published texts that media did not become repeaters of language aggression.

The aggression of language expression is peculiar to oral political polemic, but in the press texts on political subjects, in our opinion, have to have the style verified in the language relation. The expressivity common to many heated political debates can be expressed by various means of the literary language, without using rough and colloquial lexicon. Professional ethical standards demand not to accent "political convictions, intellectual and physical defects of individuals or groups - except cases when such information has a direct bearing on a case in point" [The Belgorod Region Journalist's Professional and Ethical Code, http].

The publication "The Ballerina from a Grand Piano against the background of the Fright in a Picket" (The Voice of Belogorie No. 20 May, 2006) shows neglect to these norms, the author criticizes not the ideas, but persons. The journalist is not limited to the characteristic of political preferences of picketers, the text contains hints on physical defects and mental inadequacy of heroes which are identified: ... if the man with brains is on friendly terms, he will not go solo or in companies of two-three to the central square; ... spring aggravation of ambitions, plus avitaminosis, minus inadequacy - should look for somewhere nearby A. Sirotenko and A. Gritsayev from Shebekino; local activists of public life told us approximately so: there is a black sheep on every flock...; relied ... on "fright" in a picket.



The journalist calls the political opponents "monsters" and "Pokemons" ("pocket monsters" - from English pokemon, poket monster), near the photo of participants of the action places a picture of the rock group Lordi in monstrous suits to show subject to comparison and "to prove" the choice of the nomination.

In the analysis of advertising texts regarding observance of ethics requirements it is necessary to consider extent of advertising language influence on national language. Daily practically each person faces a set of advertisements, at the same time texts are perceived as samples, and their repeatability promotes fixing of such samples in consciousness of addressees. On one hand, influence of advertising on language can be positive: advertising is a source of neologisms, promotes fast development of linguistic borrowing. On the other hand, the quality of advertising texts quite often leaves much to be desired: in the sphere of the Russian advertising the neglect is both observed regarding the standards of the literary language, and ethical standards. Violation of the accepted language and communicative norms in advertising is represented to linguists a serious problem [Astanina, 2014, page 81].

In general the violations of norm allowed in the advertising text can be divided into two types - unintentional and intended.

Unintentional violations are the mistakes made because of a lack of advertisers' literacy. Unintentional violations are observed at all levels of language: lack of quotes when writing names of firms and goods, substandard use of capital letters, accenting, spelling and punctuation errors. Such violations of the literary language standards testify, in our opinion, to non-professionalism, indifference to quality of the produced information, misunderstanding of the advertising text culture interrelation and its perception by the addressee. In the conditions of insufficient literacy of the population an advertising textual mistake becomes the factor promoting a bigger falling of the general level of speech culture and culture of the Russian society in general. See: [Polonsky, 2010, page 254].

Intended violations of norm are connected with purposeful impact on the addressee. U. Eco wrote about it: "Technology of advertising in its best samples, apparently, is based on the information idea which is that the announcement that draws the more attention, is the one that breaks the accepted communicative norms, reconstructing thus the system of rhetorical expectations" [Eco, 2006, page 223]. The serious linguo-ethic problem is hidden, however, in delimitation permitted in use of such receptions.

One of the intended violations sources is the language creativity. The modern advertising discourse is represented as a some kind of a base language game. Game receptions create an expression, draw attention of the addressee, and promote memorability that, eventually, defines communicative advertising efficiency.

In general assessing use of a language game in advertising positively, we are forced to note that not always the created texts meet standards of ethics. For example, word creation on the basis of obscene language became a tendency. The tabooed lexeme at the same time acts as a word sample which morphemic structure with replacement of a root producing a new word. The difficult, dual sense results: on the remaining lexical meaning of the tabooed unit the value brought by a new root and concerning object of advertising is imposed. For example, the word "окурительный" (smoking "Chicken Fries" in Burger King!), which combined semantics of the making obscene adjective meaning "very good" (obscene for sex) with semantics of an adjective chicken.

Other examples of this kind: Look do not become aggravated! (advertising of spicy burger); Stuff your face! Just now! Second Big-King free; Cheeuck! Cheeseburger for only 49 rubles. In fact, in such advertising texts word creation acts as a contrivance of a substandard word.

Violation of language ethics is noted in the texts containing lexicon of "a corporal bottom", words hints and puns of sexual orientation. For example: At me costs! And you? (advertising of bookmaker office); - Why chicken taste better at Burger King? - Because we grow eggs faster! (advertising the network of fast food restaurants); There is no staring at others' breasts when directly before you the natural XL chicken breasts "Chicken of Fillet" from Burger King lie. Take for

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a breast!; We nurse (advertising of sandwich with chicken breast).

Such advertising, certainly, attracts attention, but causes more likely negative reaction of audience. According to L.P. Amiri's remark, such advertising texts "are not just vulgar and substandard from the point of view of ethics and morals, but also can exert impact on morality of younger generation" [Ilyasova, 2009, page 45].

The problem of a language ethics in the advertising text is especially relevant for advertising on the Internet. This sector is the least adjustable legislation on advertising now, there is no accurate position on this occasion and in the Russian code of practice of advertising and marketing communications. In the conditions of fierce competition advertisers intentionally break norms of language ethics, widely using colloquial lexicon, negative and expressional jargons, obscene lexicon, etc.

The use of such words can sometimes be unmotivated, not corresponding to contents of an advertising appeal in any way. For example, such is the advertising text in the advertising video of online casino: "Volcano"... "Volcano"... "Volcano"... Boobs! "Volcano"... "Volcano"... "Volcano"... Got confused in "volcanoes"? Check out "Суперслотсказино. ком" where all your classical slots and huge bonuses! The viewer hears and sees constantly repeating name of widely advertised rival casino ("Volcano"). The sudden use in the text of the word "boobs" relating to the lowered lexicon is intended to provide, apparently, shock perception, to focus attention of the addressee.

Online casinos are very active advertisers placing the advertising on entertainment portals of RuNet now, their advertising texts become a subject of discussion, a source of Internet memes. Special attention of audience to aggressive and, according to us, unethical advertising, can significantly reduce the level of culture of society.

In 2017 the song of popular youth group advertising online casino and for 25% consisting of slangy lexicon was widely adopted: "Raised some bucks, others s*ck, began to reckon with me... <...> You have a talent, brother. What? To play online. "Azino three axes". A game began. In total on garlic.... Today I walk, mo-

ney don't fit in me pocket". Except violation of norms of language ethics, questions are raised by the vital reference points broadcast in the song: the supreme value - the money allowing a message carefree, idle life. Thus, the analyzed advertising text contradicts standards of the Russian code of practice of advertising and marketing communications as breaks "the standard principles of morals and morality" [The Russian Code of Advertising and Marketing Communications Practice, http]. In this regard the popularity of such advertising is disturbing: besides actually advertising broadcasting, the roller in 5 months gained more than 7 million viewings on You-Tube, became an object of a set of parodies which do not differ in the high level of speech culture too.

The analysis showed that in the majority of the conflict generating journalistic media texts ethical standards were violated: authors violated requirements of accuracy, reliability; interfered with private life; showed language aggression. It undermines confidence in the journalist personally, in a profession in general and in the institute of mass media. Despite the absence of sanctions for violation of professional and ethical standards, they have to be perceived as indisputable, above the provisions of the law. In "The Conceptual Report on the Media Law" it is specified: "In the conditions of the free market journalists have to strive more for responsibility, than to observance of a letter of the law. Reputation ... journalists and confidence of public that ... the publication is exact and impartial have to stimulate rather aspiration to observance of rules of journalistic ethics, than to exact respect for the provisions of the law" [The Modern Law of Mass Media in the USA, 1997, page 47-48].

The texts analyzed on compliance to requirements of media ethics and the professional standard of specialists in advertising show methods of unfair impact on the consumer. By means of intended speech violations unethical advertising is capable to loosen norms of ethics in consciousness of the person [Astanina, 2014, page 82].

4. CONCLUSIONS

Violations of ethical standards in the journalistic text have to be discussed by members of professional community and the public - in the form of publications in media to induce journalists into conscious and consecutive observance of ethical standards.

The texts based on messages of experts and other sources of information before publication should be checked carefully for compliance of the facts and reality, and opinion expression forms - to professional ethics standards of journalists.

In order for the advertising text to meet standards of a language ethics, in our opinion, it is necessary to accurately and definitely, with the indication of criteria, formulate the concept "ethics" of the code of professional standards that advertisement producers are guided by in their choice of methods of influencing the audience.

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