Rzeszów, 06.10.2023

Honorata Smerecka

Summary

Genological analysis of the vlog as an internet genre

Tremendous technological changes over the last decades have meant that an ordinary paper diary (literary or personal) has evolved before the eyes of the average language user and has become a new genre - an online blog. The pervasive access to the Internet, changes in lifestyle and way of thinking as well as the use of new media have somehow forced another variation: vlog (videoblog). Interestingly, all three genres function side by side, they do not exclude each other, but rather complement each other.

Blogging and vlogging are phenomena that have not yet been thoroughly researched. So far, they have been of interest to adepts of linguistics and culture, who published the first scientific studies on this subject. Vlogging, i.e. regular recording of amateur video blogs and posting them on the Internet, is currently a fashionable phenomenon and eagerly accepted by Internet users. The existence of this form in Poland forced the need for new nomenclature related to such activities. Specialized vocabulary describing the work of Internet users, e.g. on the social networking site YouTube, is becoming more and more common and can be considered as belonging to the colloquial style. This portal is treated as portable Internet television, where the program is not imposed on viewers and provides thematic diversity. In the field of linguistic research, the Internet is a fashionable topic, but one that constantly requires updating.

This work concerns a genological analysis of the Internet genre such as video blogging. On the basis of selected, thematically diverse examples of three YouTube channels, an attempt was made to define the genre, determine its structure and compositionas well as genre determinants.

Vlog as a genre is located in cyberspace and is structurally determined by the technical aspects and limitations of YouTube. In this dissertation, it was recognized as a genre in the form of a collection, which may contain non-internet or utility genres (e.g. announcements, descriptions, invitations, compliments and memes).

The presented material basis comes from the online, free and publicly available YouTube service. Vlogs were separated according to thematic categories suggested by Marta Majorek [2015]. The work compiles three thematically different profiles of still active authors. Ula Pedantula's vlogs are advisory in nature, 'Historia Bez Cenzury' - educational and entertaining, while the content on the 'nieesia25' channel is typically personal. The aspect of the number of subscribers and continuous operation on YouTube was also important ('nieesia25' has been publishing videos since 2009, while

'Ula Pedantula' and 'Historia Bez Cenzury' since 2013). The research material consists of the following set of films published in the years 2009-2022: 382 films on the 'Ula Pedantula' channel, 318 episodes on the 'Historia Bez Cenzury' channel and 1,300 films of niecsia25'spersonal vlog, which were obtained by archiving the verbal content with constantly conducted content analysis, considering characteristic elements and distinguishing features of each of them. In addition to the videos, descriptions, titles and comments from the previously mentioned YouTube channels were analyzed. Attempts were made to characterize the lexis, structure and composition of the genre. The analysis of the collected material was carried out after a library query, pilot studies [Smerecka 2018], and especially based on the literature included in the bibliography and netographyas well as on the author's own observations and comments.

This dissertation is a linguistic work using the tools of general linguistics. The study used the genological text analysis proposed by Maria Wojtak [e.g. 2004, 2006, 2014a]. The chosen methodology is particularly concerned with pragmatics and style. The analysis also used terminology from other fields of science, including stylistics or text theory with references to culture.

The work was divided into two parts. The four initial chapters are theoretical and methodological in nature. The first chapter covers issues related to Internet communication, new media, Web 2.0 and virtual communities. The second chapter is a reflection on linguistic and Internet genology, the genre of expression and its place in the sphere of Internet communication. The third chapter presents the definitions of a blog as an Internet genre from various research disciplines, the history of the evolution of blogs and describes the suggested classification of blogs (due to form, content and other factors) as well as determines their genre determinants. The focus was also on the motivations for creating this Internet genre and its social function and a blog was presented from a marketing perspective (commercial use). Then, the elements of the blog structure and linguistic exponents were presented. The fourth chapter attempts to define a video blog as an Internet genre, presents its short history, and discusses the principles of sharing videos on the free, publicly available YouTube portal. The classification of vlogs considering the thematic criteria and new lexical concepts related to the field of vlogs were presented.

The second section of the dissertation is the research part, consisting of six subsequent chapters. The first one characterized selected YouTube channels. Then the problem of the structure of the YouTube channel and vlog episode was addressed. The name and logo of each selected channel were explained in turn. Later in the chapter, vlog descriptions and their function in the structure of the genre are analyzed. Chapter six contains a linguistic analysis of vlog titles, paying attention to these titles that play with the recipient and distinguishing abbreviations typical for various types of videos. Chapter seven presents the delimiting compositional framework of selected vlogs, which was illustrated with appropriate exemplary material. In chapter eight, a linguistic and stylistic analysis of the language

of vlog narration was made, linguistic determinants were isolated along with examples illustrating them. Chapter nine is a research review of the comment field, both from the perspective of the sender (vlogger) and the recipient (viewer). The important comment functions such as marketing and image have been highlighted here.

Two concepts should be distinguished: *vlog* and *vlog channel*. Channel is a broader term, it covers all pragmatic technical aspects, identical for every user. The tabs provide statistical information and short descriptions of the channel profile, as well as the organization of videos according to the criteria selected by the vlogger. The channel owner can personalize selected content through the channel name, logo, way of organizing videos or eye-catching announcements of episodes.

However, the unchangeable components of the structure of a vlog episode, resulting from the technical aspects of the website,are playback settings and screen parameters located in the lower corners of the video, episode title, the name and logo of the channel, date of addition, number of subscribers and viewers, buttons allowing for quick response from portal users, a description of the vlog and the ability to add comments.

Vlog descriptions fulfill informational and (self-)advertising functions. They can be called movie previews because they show the presented content in a short form. In the descriptions, vlog creators add links to the presented goods, social media platforms, business partners or other episodes. They also encourage you to subscribe and like videos.

The name is a factor that attracts viewers' attention, a sign of recognition and, consequently, the brand. In the analyzed channels, the creators use a pun ('Ula Pedantula'), the ambiguity of words ('Historia Bez Cenzury') and diminutives (in this case, abbreviations of diminutives: Agniesia - nieesia). This proves the creativity and resourcefulness of vloggers, because positive associations built around the brand and their products are the basic assumptions of branding. All promotional activities and encouraging recipients to act (clicking subscriptions, giving likes and leaving comments) serve to create a positive image of the channel.

Important elements of the vlog structure are the subscribe and like buttons ("thumbs up"). They are indicators of the channel's popularity, show viewers' sympathy and provide financial profits. Vloggers bring significant financial benefits from cooperation with various companies. It is most often of an affiliate nature. Channel creators use the phenomenon of product placement in vlogs, which is most often signaled in the initial segments of the video.

The title of the vlog is an important factor influencing the recipient. Therefore, it must be intriguing and attention-grabbing. Moreover, linguistically attractive titles attract and motivate the recipient and retain their attention. On Ula's channel, the titles are stylized as mini advice. They are not very intriguing and only serve to present the content of the vlog. Sometimes 'Pedantula' makes the

message more attractive by playing a game with the recipient. In the case of titles on the 'Historia Bez Cenzury' channel, the creators use puns mechanisms that increase the persuasive goal. These titles are often provocative and arouse the interest and curiosity of the recipients. Vlog creators, in order to reduce the distance between interlocutors, use the youth variety of colloquial language. On the 'nicesia25' channel, the vlogger presents topics related to everyday life and family, presents and tests cosmetics or other gadgets as well as presents fashion styles.

The motivation to start vlogging may be the desire to gain popularity, the desire to confide in someone, share their experience, diversify the monotony of everyday life, educate others or earn money.

In the process of publishing vlogs on YouTube, the role of comments is extremely important. They allow interaction between the video sender and the recipients. Every popular (i.e. liked) YouTube channel has its own community that actively participates in the reception of vlogs: they subscribe, like, comment, advise, give opinions and suggest new topics. They create a community based on similar interests.

In addition to the topic, viewers are also attracted by the program host. Based on the analyzes of comments, it can be concluded that Internet users want to see active, resourceful, energetic individuals with a sense of humor and a positive attitude towards the world and people. A vlogger must feel good in front of the camera and be natural. Naturalness is a feature extremely appreciated by subscribers, often noticed and complimented by them. Internet users pay attention to the authenticity of a person's personality and artificiality, falsehood and being for show repel potential viewers. The positive reception of the hosts transfers into viewing figures.

Vlogs are original videos posted on the Internet portal YouTube, in which the creator conducts his monologue directly into the camera lens. After the analyses, an attempt can be made to identify the genre determinants of the vlog: striving for authenticity, sincerity of the message, interactivity, monologue, persuasive nature, interaction with viewers via comments or likes and regularity of sharing. A professional YouTube channel is treated like a company that brings tangible financial profits and employs employees - the host is usually the showpiece of the program. Care for the viewer is expressed through direct phrases, response to the left comments, interaction with viewers via Q&A videos, regular addition of videos, cooperation with business partners, consistent style of the program and response to current political, social and cultural events (also on related social media).

The criterion for classifying video blogs is the topic. Taking this aspect into account, there are various types of vlogs: personal, technological, entertainment, educational, fashion, parenting, social, makeup, etc.

The lexeme vlog has become a word-formation basis for creating new concepts related to this field of entertainment: *vlogger, to vlog, vlogosphere, vlogster, vlogmas*. As a result of looking for new

ways to diversify videos, many different types and related acronyms have been created, such as DIY, Q&A and F&A.

The vlog is internally structured: it contains the beginning (opening credits, logo, formulas for greeting viewers), the actual contentand a farewell (this includes requests for subscriptions and an invitation to watch the next episode, optional end credits or bloopers during recordings). Organizing a program allows you to establish and maintain contact with your audience.

The analyzes also allowed for the characterization of the language of vlogs. In terms of comments, it is typical of the features of communication on the Internet: the use of abbreviations, loose communication, spoken language in written form, omission of diacritical marks, use of capital letters, emotionalism of statements (manifested in the lexical character and in multiple punctuation marks, e.g. exclamation marks, question marks), spelling errors, use of emoticons and other graphic elements. The vlogger's narration is dominated by colloquial language, which contains emotionally charged vocabulary (including diminutives, emphases), numerous epithets, comparisons, phraseological compounds and their innovations, interjections, additions and linguistic humor. The language on the 'Historia Bez Cenzury' channel is stylized as a youth sociolect, which clearly indicates the main addressee of the vlogs. In the syntax of the spoken language of 'nieesia25', there are many anacoluthons, interjections, understatements, interludes and additions.

Creating (and watching) video blogs emphasizes the natural need for contact with other people. This dissertation is a small part of the research on the vlog genre and the language of the Internet. It is obvious that with the evolution and changes in the regulations of the YouTube social networking site, new types of videos and new challenges for YouTubers will be created, limited only by their creativity. YouTube (including vlogs) is becoming a free, mobile Internet television with a personalized program and options for direct, immediate response to the narrative. These remarks may become suggestions for further, more in-depth research on Internet discourse, relations between Internet users, online communication (between producer and recipient) and the vlog genre.

Honorata Smereka