

PhD THESIS SUMMARY

Author: Justyna Majchrowska M.A.

Supervisor: prof. UR, dr hab. Grażyna Filip

Topic: Structural and linguistic analysis of selected Internet portals. Comparative study.

The subject of the thesis *Structural and linguistic analysis of selected Internet portals. Comparative study* was to conduct a research on three selected Polish Internet portals (defining them interchangeably as vortals, websites or web pages). These are the following vortals: Pudelek.pl, PCLab.pl and Gotujmy.pl which are interesting not only in structural but also linguistic terms. The presentation of the mentioned websites, run by various authors, enables inspiring comparative research.

The web portals as apparently new methods of presenting facts and interpersonal communication derive from existing forms of transmitting content, especially from press genres. The comparison of these three thematically, colouristically, structurally, generically and linguistically different web portals shows their similarities especially in the inner structure as well as style and language of the users/recipients and co-authors. The genres in the web portals draw from well-known communication channels (especially press) and through patterns constitute their own ways of conveying content and communication on the website. The purpose of the analysis in this thesis is structural and linguistic comparison of the selected web portals. The indication of the aforementioned determinants of the analyzed web portals and genres within them constitutes the basis of the conducted research.

I wonder about the status of the genres transferred from different communication areas and the impact of technology which modifies them to different degrees. I consider the position of the sender and the recipient - their methods of autopresentation and the communication act in the Internet discourse, pointing out the alternation of their occurrence. I analyse the methods of communication in order to distinguish the stylistic and linguistic determinants.

This dissertation consists of seven chapters. The first three are a theoretical and methodological introduction and the following four chapters are the research part.

The first chapter covers the Internet characteristics. I present its original functions, refer to the initial means of interpersonal communication, e.g. the era of signals, signs, writing, printing, telecommunication, computer and telecomputer. I notice that the Internet is a still evolving variant of communication which, by adopting a new framework, still draws from primary forms of communication. The reference to the Jay David Bolter's notion of *computer memory* and Walter Ong's *secondary orality* is a confirmation of that. The reference to the observations made by Eugeniusz Wilk, who treats *secondary orality* as the extension of literacy, shows that the Internet (including web portals) is a speech genre being a variation of the existing forms of interpersonal communication.

The second chapter *The specificity of Internet communication* starts with the introduction of interpersonal communication. I describe the fundamental structures of language and mass communication, which constitute an essential part of understanding the transformation in online means of communication. The marketing communication scheme (the participants of communication, the message, the channel, the noises, the feedback, the communication context) presents the communication on the web portals. The main reason of modification of communication in the virtual environment is technology (computer and network) which developed a new type of communication - computer-mediated communication (CMC), deriving from different types of conversation. What draws attention here is a dialog, interactive and hypertext character of the medium. With strict regard to traditional media it is decentralisation and control, capacity, interactivity, flexibility of form and content as well as the manner of use.

The communication context - mainly the media and Internet discourse constitutes an essential factor in the conducted structural and linguistic research of web portals, which can be confirmed by referring to Sebastian Przybyszewski's observations.

In the third chapter *Contemporary linguistic genology and the generic type of web portals* I refer to the fundamental assumptions of genological research perspective. The reference to the genesis of linguistic genology, including the theory of speech act by Anna Wierzbicka, John Austin, John Searle and the theory of conversational implicature by Paul Grice constitutes the introduction to the notion of genological text analysis by Maria Wojtak.

This concept, deriving from Michaił Bachtin's and Stefania Skwarczyńska's findings, appears as a starting point in this dissertation. Of the four aspects determined

by Maria Wojtak (structural, linguistic, cognitive and pragmatic), in my analysis I focus on two most distinctive ones, i.e. structural and linguistic components. The cognitive and pragmatic aspects are treated as a complementary element in my research. In order to establish the generic identity I provide a reference to canonical, alternate and adaptive model. The outlined research method is enhanced by the terminology from similar fields, e.g. linguistic stylistics, media studies, communication theory, linguistic text theory and the elements of cybercultural studies. For the purpose of conducted research I present the understanding of the concept of Internet genre which I perceive as monomedial series, functioning in one communication device, which particular components condition each other and technical factors have key importance.

Web portals are the material base - a primary Internet genre. Hence, in the following chapters I also specify its definition. A vortal is therefore a heterogenous Internet genre which I consider as a genre in the form of collection.

A web portal is an Internet genre which consists of a distinctive and communicative text framework (title, subtitle). It includes a table of contents in a form of a home page teaser. It is characterised by silhouetted composition (*layout* is composed of the main column and side frames).

The next two chapters - the fourth and the fifth deal with structural components, while the sixth and the seventh relate to stylistic aspect. *Structural indicators characterising the generic similarity of Internet portals with different themes* is a chapter in which I pay attention to the origin of the names of the analysed portals, which directly refer to the presented content. PCLab.pl is a portal on information and technology issues, Pudelek.pl - entertainment, and Gotujmy.pl - culinary. The descriptions of the web portals in search engines is another element of self-presentation of analyzed websites. The co-existing colours and themes of each of them is the culmination. The colour identifies the topic of the portals in a specific way (pink - entertainment/gossip websites, green/white - culinary sites).

In the fifth chapter called *Genericness inside the Intertnet portal* I present the speech genres existing in the analyzed communication area. The thematic variety of the analyzed vortals determines the genre structures located inside them. The thematic threads presented on the portals are enclosed in schematic structures - *netlogs*, consisting of *base texts* and *opinion texts*. In the analyzed websites, *the base texts* are offline genres (teaser, message, silhouette), online genres (forum, blog) and utility

messages (advice, recipe) whereas *opinion texts* include users comments (speech acts). The third, permanent element of a *netlog* is the illustrative material (photo, video).

The sixth chapter *Netlog participants and their conversational strategies* refers to the delimitation of the text (title and lid) in relation to conversational strategies and anti-strategies. Particular attention is paid to the identification of senders and recipients of the web portals as well as lexis, revealing each of them. In that part I notice that the senders (professionals and non-professionals), publishing content on the Internet show less creativity and originality than recipients-creators.

In the last chapter - the seventh *Language and style of communication on the Internet portals* I try to show the differentiators of the style and language of both the senders and recipients, who communicate in the particular web portals. I use the principle of opposition to indicate the similarities and differences in the way interlocutors communicate. I pay attention to colloquiality as the leading style in each analyzed portal. I quote, by referring to the representative examples, exponents of expressiveness in the statements of portal creators. I notice the expressive potential of the verbs, nouns, epithets, as well as word-formation structures, phraseologies and functions of graphic signs. In the language of recipients-creators I focus on the ways of creativity which imply colloquiality of expression. The material base allows to determine a lexicon, phraseologies, comparisons, graphic forms of expressing emotions and vulgarisation with its various varieties (camouflaged vulgarisation).

To sum up, this dissertation is a part of Internet discourse, being an essential element of contemporary Polish language. The Polish language of the 21st century is influenced by language fashion, foreign language borrowings and other functional styles, especially of colloquial variation.

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