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Media Texts and the Imperative of Image Linguistics

The last 25 years of the development of human civilization have brought about two significant phenomena in the field of linguistics – firstly, the entry of the digital realm into everyday life, and secondly, the related change in the definition of text, a central concept for linguistics.

Analyzing the development of the text definition in the 20th century, between 1914 and 2020, several phases can be observed, which are in congruence with the existing linguistic schools in the world at a given point in time, which has obviously been noticed by many researchers. Kirsten Adamzik in 2004 distinguished between three main textual paradigm shifts: the transphrastic phase, which can be summarized as the conception of the text as a unit larger than the sentence, the pragmatic-communicative phase, flowing directly from the achievements of pragmatists since the late 1960s (I am thinking here of the research of J. L. Austin, John Searle, Ludwig Wittgenstein and others), and the cognitive phase, which stems directly from psychology and is divided into two currents: cognitivism and cognitive science¹, which can be presented graphically as follows:

¹ K. Adamzik, *Textlinguistik. Eine einführende Darstellung*, Tübingen 2004, p. 1.



Pic. 1. Development of the text definition according to K. Adamzik (2004, p. 1)

Although this is a valuable attempt at a periodisation of research, it does not cover all the phases of definition in the development of linguistics. As late as Sambor Grucza introduces an additional phase, the semantic phase, which takes into account the aspect of textual meaning².

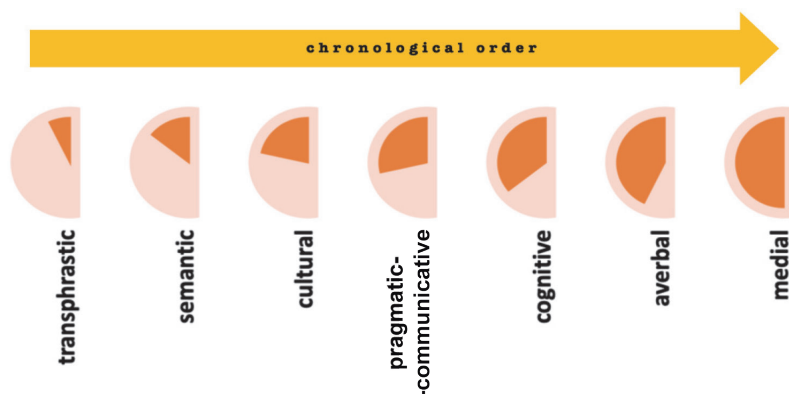


Pic. 2. Development of the text definition according to Sambor Grucza (2009)

This periodisation, however, does not take into account the achievements of cultural studies, where the text is understood as an artefact of a particular culture, which is reflected in the cultural turn in translation studies.

Apart from this aspect, unfortunately this division has also lost its relevance, because with the beginning of the Internet (and it is considered to have begun in 1995, when the first public website was created) the media text, and a few years later the essence of the verbal text appeared, worrying for the scholastic linguist, which was a contribution to the later picture linguistics. The text paradigm shift should therefore take the following form:

² S. Grucza, *Lingwistyka tekstu - jej przedmiot i cele cząstkowe badań*, [in:] *Lingwistyka tekstu w Polsce i w Niemczech. Pojęcia, problemy, perspektywy*, eds. Z. Bilut-Homplewicz, W. Czachur, M. Smykała, Rzeszów 2009, p. 96.



Pic. 3. Paradigm shifts in the text 1914–2020

Of course, there are several assumptions to be made in this scheme. Firstly, each of the phases has had a different period of influence in different countries, with the transphrastic phase in Poland lasting in research until the 1980s, as confirmed by literature searches, and each of them being applied in specific fields, e.g. the transphrastic definition is still used in the study of syntax, generative grammar, logic, and language didactics. The other phases have given rise to separate, autonomous branches of research. In particular, the last two phases - the verbal and media phases - play an important role, because by giving equal importance to image and text in the linguistic code, they opened linguistics to interdisciplinary research in semiotics, advertising, and film.

The transphrastic phase is further divided into two approaches to text – one of them corresponds to the name of the aforementioned phase, i.e. a text is a unit larger than a sentence, while the other approach is semiotic and can be observed in the research of the Tartu-Moscow School and the Prague School (K. Bühler, R. Jakobson, V. Mathesius, F. vMikó, J. Mukařovský, A. Popovič). It assumes that every text, apart from its sentence structure, is a semiotic macro-sign, possessing a special superstructure, developed differently depending on its genre and purpose³, where the verbal layer is essentially equal to other types of code of which the text is composed. A text understood in this way also has a superstructure, which in the

³ A. Popovič, *Translation as Communication*, [in:] *Translation as Comparison*, eds. A. Popovič, I. Dénes 1977, p. 5–24.

process of translation causes the well-known phenomenon of sharpening / deformation of the translation⁴.

In a slightly different direction, limited on the basis of L. Bloomfield's thesis of the largest describable linguistic unit, the sentence, research in American structuralism goes⁵. The limitation of the sentence is also evident in Chomsky's theories. The semantic phase of textual research derives, of course, from autonomously realized semiotics, but also has its roots in Noam Chomsky's revised GTG theory and is related to the famous example of the sentence from 1957 *Colorless green ideas sleep furiously*, which shows the necessity of introducing the question of meaning into the formalized model of the sentence⁶.

The same problem arises again in recent years in the context of text meaning, when automatic translation is becoming popular, which again updates the issues of long-solved problems in linguistics of polysemy, homonymy, close words, false friends, borrowings, neologisms and archaisms and text meaning, which for computer systems, even those equipped with AI, are so far not solvable.

The cultural definition of text is not in itself new, since it was introduced into linguistics by ethnography, where a text is any product of human culture, possessing individuality and uniqueness⁷, which also leads to its untranslatability to varying degrees, which again becomes well visible in the media polysystem.

The pragmatic-communicative approach treats the notion of text more broadly – as a speech act – its definition includes the variables of the communicative situation, such as the context, the effectiveness of the speech act, the direction of fit, the illocution of the author, which in time extends to the global illocution of the text. The Oxford School of Analytic Philosophy, represented among others by J. L. Austin, J. Searle, L. Wittgenstein, gave birth to such an approach. The text is seen as an element of social communication with clearly defined roles of communication participants,

⁴ B. Eichenbaum, *The Theory of the "Formal Method"*, transl. A. Kaepfe, [in:] *Aufsätze zur Theorie und Geschichte der Literatur*, Frankfurt a. Main 1926/1965.

⁵ G. Lakoff, *Toward Generative Semantics*. MIT *Mechanical Translation Project Report*, „Syntax and Semantics” 1963, no. 7, p. 43–61; J.D. McCawley (ed.), *Notes from the Linguistic Underground: Syntax and Semantics*, New York, San Francisco, London 1976.

⁶ N. Chomsky, *Syntactic Structures*, 1957, passim.

⁷ E. Sapir, *Language An introduction to the study of speech*, New York 1921; B.L. Whorf, *Language, thought, and reality: selected writings*, Cambridge 1956.

like a speech act, which in the first approach included three components: locution (the concrete message), illocution (the speaker's intention) and perlocution (the effect of the text on the recipient, its effectiveness).

Speech acts are part of the broadly conceived human speech activity as games with specific rules⁸. Each participant of communication here has his own role, a resource of possible means, a type of texts. His participation in communication requires knowledge and skills similar to a game of chess, where without knowing the rules it is impossible to play the game. Of course, one can also consider speech activity as one of the components of all social activity, as in C. Peirce's tagmemic⁹.

The text becomes in pragmatics a bundle of text-extern and text-intern elements¹⁰. The text-extern elements are, for example, presuppositions, deictic elements and the I-factors I propose¹¹. Of course, pragmatic models of text can arise as bottom-up models, where the structure and construction of illocution is analyzed, which is then transferred to specific verb groups in a given language, forming illocutionary types that are used to formulate specific types of speech acts, and top-down, where the central concept becomes communicative action¹². The task of linguistics in this view is to reconstruct in the speech act under study the intention of the speaker¹³. The global (or dominant) illocution of a text is built up from minor constituent illocutions in a specific role. The search for the author's intention is facilitated by the introduction of pragmatic connections between specific segments of the text into the model. The top-down models start from psychological models proposed among others by P. Galperin, A. Lurija, L. Vygotskij and capture the text as a bonding element of a certain community, being one of several components of the communication process.

The cognitive breakthrough in linguistics begins in the 1960s with the adoption of the achievements of the psychological study of language – to

⁸ L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, translated by D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness, London 1994, PU§7.

⁹ M.R. Mayenowa, *Spójność tekstu a postawa odbiorcy*, [in:] *O spójności tekstu*, ed. M.R. Mayenowa, Wrocław 1971, p. 189–205; Ch.S. Peirce, *The Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition*, Bloomington 1982, p. 182.

¹⁰ E. Gülich, W. Raible, *Linguistische Textmodelle. Grundlagen und Möglichkeiten*, München 1977, passim.

¹¹ P. Sulikowski, *Der literarische Text und I-Faktoren in der Übersetzung. Anhand ausgewählter Werke Zbigniew Herberts im Deutschen und Englischen. Eine kontrastive trilinguale Analyse*, Frankfurt am Main 2016.

¹² D. Viehweger, *Probleme der semantischen Analyse*, Berlin 1977, p. 35.

¹³ W. Motsch, *Anforderungen an eine handlungsorientierte Textanalyse*, "Zeitschrift für Germanistik" 1986, vol. I, no. 86, p. 269.

the definition of text come the notions of cognition, cognitive patterns and structures, issues of language generation, and the related search for linguistic universals and a universal grammar of language¹⁴. Cognitive processes defined as “data processing”¹⁵ were to be formalized in order to construct a cybernetic model of language. Indeed, the cognitive aspect plays a central role not only in the production of simple texts, but the construction of more complex utterances, where the material text itself is only the result of complex mental processes. Hence it is possible to analyze, for example, silence as a speech act, even though materially the production of such a text involves zero linguistic signs. The same will be true for texts as a result of speech disorders such as legasthenia, dysgraphia or aphasia, where the linguistic product is burdened with many deformations such as agrammatisms in Broca’s aphasia, or paragrammatisms in Wernicke’s aphasia¹⁶.

A cognitive definition of text regards it as the result of cognitive processes, a sequence of mental operations, “a document of [made] decisions, choices and combinations”¹⁷. The introduction of such a view allows for greater flexibility and a wider scope of the notion of text, as well as the inclusion of the sender’s perspective in the view.

Consequently, models of linguistic understanding and production play a central role in the cognitive approach. The first such model is established in 1975¹⁸. In this model, text comprehension takes place bottom-up, from the recognition of a phoneme or grapheme, followed by the identification of a word, phrase and sentence. In the process of reception, the recipient picks up the meanings, which are accumulated and analyzed to ultimately contribute to the construction of the global sense of the text. However, the meanings of individual texts are not individual entities, as they are accumulated in the superstructures of text genres. The

¹⁴ U. Neisser, *Cognitive psychology*, New York 1967.

¹⁵ U.L. Figge, *Die kognitive Wende in der Textlinguistik*, [in:] *Text- und Gesprächslinguistik. Ein internationales Handbuch zeitgenössischer Forschung*, K. Brinker et al., vol. 1, Berlin–New York 2000, p. 97; M. Heinemann, W. Heinemann, *Grundlagen der Textlinguistik: Interaktion – Text – Diskurs*, Tübingen 2002, p. 90.

¹⁶ A. Hegemann, *Agrammatische Sprachproduktion. Überlegungen zu Symptomatik, Diagnose und Therapie*, Köln 2004, p. 14; H. Walter, K. Poeck, D. Weniger, *Aphasie*, [in:] *Klinische Neuropsychologie. 2. edition*, ed. K. Poeck, Stuttgart–New York 1989, p. 14.

¹⁷ R.-A. de Beaugrande, W. Dressler, *Einführung in die Textlinguistik*, Tübingen 1981, p. 37.

¹⁸ W. Kintsch, T.A. van Dijk, *Toward a Model of Text Comprehension and Production*, “Psychological Review” 1978, vol. 58, no. 5, p. 363–394.

authors of the concept point to the basis of text comprehension as the decoding of individual propositions, for which macro-rules are necessary, derived from the text genre, its purpose and the text type. Macro-rules fall into three categories: deletion rules, generalization rules and constitution rules and concern respectively the deletion, substitution and synthesis of propositions in the analyzed text.

A model based on propositional understanding was developed a few years later¹⁹. As a promising concept it has been adapted to more complex texts. In a bottom-up procedure, a set of propositions of a text is reconstructed here, where two micro-propositions form a macro-proposition, these together form the meaning structure of the text. Additional help is provided by superstructures, which include the topic and meaning of the text, the main information and the typical determinants of the text type.

An interesting proposal in the field of cognitive approach was undoubtedly the procedural model of R. Beaugrande / W. Dressler²⁰, which aimed at separating the procedural phases of text production in the cognitive process, which was a novelty at the time²¹. It was also intended to act as a set of rules for text production. Cognitive procedures were divided into the following phases: planning, ideation, development, expression, parsing. Planning involved the establishment of the intention and purpose by the author of a given utterance, the search for a suitable type and genre of text to express his idea. Ideation, or finding the idea, was responsible for the implementation idea, which at the same time had a significant impact on the overall structure of the text. The development phase involved finding knowledge spaces and structuring logical elements. The expression phase involved finding the available linguistic means to achieve the goal. The final phase – parsing – involved the synthesis of linguistic means and the linearization of the statement. The second part of the concept was a procedural analysis of the text with similar elements in reverse – from grammatical analysis, through the activation of concepts, reconstruction, compression of content, sorting of meaningful elements, up to the reconstruction of the author's idea and the original illocution of the text, i.e. the plan and meaning of the text. This model fully reveals the range of meaning of the term text, much wider than in previous epochs of linguistics.

¹⁹ T.A. Dijk, *Macrostructures*, Hillsdale, NJ 1980.

²⁰ R. Beaugrande, W. Dressler, *Einführung*, p. 36ff.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

The question of text as an averbal creation is essentially ever-present in linguistics, since in any text analyses, regardless of paradigm, one reaches the non-linear and non-verbal level.

In 2012, J. Wildfeuer divided texts into linguistic and non-linguistic constructs, and observed the progressive modification of this notion and the equipping of texts with features of intertextuality, intermodality and intersemioticity²². It is this division that signals the necessity of image linguistics as a paradigm in linguistics. Thus, we are only separated from the definition of the averbal by the thin fabric of the verbalization of the message. It is enough to leave the surface structures of the sentence in order to reach uninflected modules or initial forms of words, and at a further stage to concepts that are no longer verbal and combine with each other on the basis of synesthesia of contents from different sources and senses, as can be seen in the discussed model. If we also consider smilies, pictograms, complex graphic or filmic representations, memes, or the already mentioned silence as text, we can easily accept the averbalism of text. Of course, with this phenomenon comes its characteristic features, largely repeated in the notion of ‘media text’.

A broad definition of text (usually as a literary text) has been associated with semiotic research as far back as the 1970s, and can be seen in the work of Barthes, Lotman or Riffaterre, but its roots can already be seen in the work of the Tartu-Moscow school. To illustrate this approach to text, I will briefly cite J. Lotman’s semiotic model of 1977, R. Barthes’ reflections on the image as text, and M. Riffaterre’s remarks.

Lotman²³ sees the literary text as a fusion of all the elements of artistic expression that makes it impossible to separate the information from the structure of the work: “In creating and perceiving works of art, man transmits, receives and retains a special artistic form of information which cannot be isolated from the structural properties of the artistic text”²⁴.

Information is transmitted in the form of a code consisting of signs, which, however, need not and rarely are linguistic signs of a general language or specialized languages. More frequently used are codes from a system of

²² J. Wildfeuer, *Intersemiosis in Film. Towards a New Organization of Semiotic Resources in Multimodal Filmic Text*, „Multimodal Communication”, no. 1(3), p. 277.

²³ J.M. Lotman, *The Structure of the Artistic Text*, translated by G. Lenhoff and R. Vroon, “Michigan Slavic Contributions” 1977, no. 7.

²⁴ J. Lotman, *Structure*, p. 6.

metalanguage, the complexity of which goes beyond the framework of a particular language, such as the systems of religion, economics or art²⁵. The second frequently used semiotic system is the system of conventional signals, which is largely equivalent between cultures, such as information signs, road signs, traffic, air or maritime signals. Lotman therefore understands linguistic signs as only one of the possible systems of communication within social interaction²⁶. Other possible semiotic systems here will be artificial languages, meta-languages also called secondary languages, covering specific areas of religion, tradition, customs or widely understood art. A work of art is in his conception a conglomerate of signs from various semiotic systems, ordered according to a specific poetics. Thus, they can be understood as texts of art, a kind of secondary language²⁷, whose complexity increases along with the complexity of the content conveyed by a work of art. This leads to the conclusion that one cannot clearly separate the so-called form from the content of the work, and in the process of translation one must remain within the same genre of text. The use of a non-artistic code is an interference in the structure of the work ergo its deformation²⁸. Lotman goes a step further and states that the work of art has a structure so closely related to the writer's idea that its violation would kill it, just like in a living organism where a biologist tries to separate the tissues from the life of the organism²⁹. A work of art therefore uses a specific language as a text, knowledge of its rules allows the viewer to interpret the work similar to the author's illocution.

The language of art is in some of its areas tangible, as in painting, especially in gesture painting, structural painting, sculpture or happening. In an artistic work there are constant semiotic changes combined with changes in the validity of particular elements of the code³⁰, which can be interpreted as the variability of extra-textual elements, and such are intersemiotic, intertextual and intercultural references, characterized by exceptional transience and lability. This changeability becomes visible at the moment of reception of the work, which each time is a new reconstruction of meanings. The elements of an artistic work are in constant tension

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11 and 59.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

and conflict between systems, which, combined with the aforementioned lability, results in the work's interpretative changeability depending on the era or cultural circle of the recipient.

The author considers all forms of artworks as the expression of the realization of an ideally conceived model, which is unchangeable³¹. In his opinion, there is no adequate transition between the verbal and non-verbal code, because the verbal code has significant limitations that do not allow it to be reflected in the non-verbal code. Hence, there is a conclusion to consider the non-verbal code as a more complete possibility of expressing the intended content. The elements of the applied codes cause the creation of a semantic superstructure in the work, which is a macro-sign with unique properties. This sign is deconstructed in the process of reception, the degree of deconstruction depends on the type of code and the knowledge of the recipient³². The key to understanding a text is to discover its semantic core³³. This corresponds to S. Barańczak's concept of semantic dominant³⁴, created of course for verbal text.

Roland Barthes considers photographs to be pictorial texts, at the base of which there is always a linguistic structure, a verbal structure³⁵, which together with graphic signs forms the semantic whole of the message. The signs used in a message, a pictorial text, are graphic or iconic and in the process of reception they are read in the same way as verbal signs, hence Barthes speaks of "reading photographs"³⁶.

One should consider whether J. Lotman's and R. Barthes's concepts are equivalent. For J. Lotman, a non-verbal text consists of signs in a different code, while for Barthes a graphic text such as a painting, a film or a play has got no code, so dividing it into signs is pointless³⁷, because their code is their style, references to reality or doctrine. However, Barthes introduces an interesting division of artistic communication by means of graphic texts reminiscent of de Saussure's concept of the linguistic sign: there is connotative and denotative communication³⁸. Denotative communication

³¹ Ibid., p. 20.

³² Ibid., p. 22 and 34.

³³ Ibid., p. 38.

³⁴ S. Barańczak, *Ocalone w tłumaczeniu*, Kraków 2007, passim.

³⁵ R. Barthes, *Image Music Text*, transl. an chosen by S. Heath, London 1977, p. 16.

³⁶ R. Barthes, *Image...*, p. 27.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 17.

³⁸ Ibid.

is the understanding of the signs used in a more literal way, the aim of artistic communication, however, is connotative communication, that is, the way the message is decoded by the target culture of the recipient. Undoubtedly, this is how media texts are read nowadays, especially their new types, such as emoticons, smilies, screens, memes and vines.

R. Barthes emphasizes that also in graphic communication certain stereotypes are used, which are, however, different than in verbal text: “schemes, colors, graphisms, gestures, expressions, arrangements of elements”³⁹. Undoubtedly, such elements repeated in graphic texts create series of texts, and perhaps genres of media text.

In terms of reception, the author stresses that graphic text is received by means of usually used sign resources, consumed:

on the one hand, the press photograph is an object that has been worked on, chosen, composed, constructed, treated according to professional, aesthetic or ideological norms, which are so many factors of connotation; while on the other, this same photograph is not only perceived, received, it is read, connected more or less consciously by the public that consumes it to a traditional stock of signs⁴⁰.

The term ‘content consumption’ appears in the media age in terms of the types of receivers of text, be they phones or tablets. This issue points to the division of the process of production and reception of a media text, and it is a strongly asymmetrical arrangement, since most users of electronic media are limited to passive consumption of content.

An important aspect of the construction of a media text is the essential duality of the code – the starting point is the naturally understood code of our reality, which is the basic domain of signs, in terms of reception the recipient needs a code in a different convention, which must be found in order to decode the message in a manner similar to that intended by the author⁴¹.

The verbal element in the graphic text has a function that accompanies or complements the message, R. Barthes even considers it as a kind of parasite⁴², which preys on the message and causes it to change.

The relationship between the verbal and the graphic element is divided by R. Barthes into three groups. In the case of the amplification

³⁹ Ibid., p. 18.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 19.

⁴² Ibid., p. 25.

of the visual message by the verbal text there is amplification, in the case of the commentary function there is the production of new content. The last relation is negation or contradiction, arising from the paradoxical juxtaposition of image and text⁴³.

The meaning of the image-text, or blend, is divided into three groups: first, into informative meaning and symbolic meaning, which together form denotative meaning, and into connotative, broad, infinite, obtuse meaning: “it seems to open the field of meaning totally, that is infinitely [...] opening out into the infinity of language, it can come through as limited in the eyes of analytic reason [...] [It is] indifferent to moral or aesthetic categories”⁴⁴.

It is precisely the image-text constructions that appear in electronic media most often in a complementary form – the two components are inseparably united and complement each other, while the recipient interprets all components of such a message as memes and the whole information as text⁴⁵.

M. Riffaterre also conceptualizes text as a semiotic quantity and divides texts into two main groups: utilitarian, non-literary texts and literary texts⁴⁶. In his view, a utilitarian text consists of a combination of several semiotic signs, while a literary text creates from the same signs a super value, in a sense a macro sign, consisting of smaller units and intertextual references. According to M. Riffaterre, verbal and non-verbal texts have the same value in communication, consisting of differently related signs from different semiotic systems. Thus, it is important to emphasize that the treatment of the image as a text has been present in linguistics for at least forty years, but it was only the digital revolution that highlighted the features of text already discussed in semiotics and its relationship with the graphic message.

The issue of the necessity of image linguistics stems from several facts. These are the already mentioned digital revolution, the pictorial turn noted even before it⁴⁷, as well as the extension, the change of existing texts in media communication towards multimedia and multimodality⁴⁸.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 26ff.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 55.

⁴⁵ G. Kress, T. van Leeuwen, *Reading Images. The Grammar of Visual Design*, London 1998.

⁴⁶ M. Riffaterre, *Semiotyka intertekstualna: interpretant*, „Pamiętnik Literacki“ 1988, no. 9/1, p. 297–314.

⁴⁷ W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, Chicago 1994.

⁴⁸ J.A. Bateman, K.-H. Schmidt, *Multimodal Film Analysis: How Films Mean*, New York 2013; G. Kress, T. van Leeuwen, *Reading*; Ch. Maaß, I. Rink, Ch. Zehrer, *Forschungsstelle Leichte Sprache: Forschungsfelder im Überblick*, www.uni-hildesheim.de/media/fb3/uebersetzungswissenschaft/Leichte_Sprache_Seite/Publikationen/

Several decades after the semioticians' accurate statements, there is a demand for equal analysis of texts and images⁴⁹. The rationale for this is the aforementioned equality of function of visual and verbal messages, which is largely true. Already Peirce considers images in terms of their functions, which he divides into iconic and symbolic functions⁵⁰. This issue is taken up many times, significantly by W.J. Mitchell in his text *Picture Theory*⁵¹ and T. Tomaszewicz⁵². The latter stresses that the early Jakobson's division of translation types shows that a text consists not only of linguistic signs, but also of graphic elements such as symbols or pictograms⁵³.

According to T. Tomaszewicz, signs of different kinds in a media text occur in a certain order, but are not coherent with each other. The meaning of the text is created in the process of reception of the entirety of the signs of each kind used in it, and there are, according to Tomaszewicz, three possible relations between the linguistic and non-linguistic signs: substitution, interpretation and complementarity.

Media text has the feature of multimodality, which results from the nature of communication, taking place simultaneously in different types of media⁵⁴. A new kind of media product textuality is even proposed⁵⁵,

Forschung_gesamt.pdf [access: 10.03.2022]; K. O'Halloran (ed.), *Multimodal Discourse Analysis: Systemic Functional Perspectives*, London – New York 2004; H. Stöckl, *Zeichen, Text und Sinn – Theorie und Praxis der multimodalen Textanalyse*, [in:] *Textsemiotik. Studien zu multimodalen Medientexten*, eds. E.M. Eckkrammer, G. Held, Frankfurt am Main 2006, p. 11–26.

⁴⁹ U. Schmitz, *Sehflächenforschung. Eine Einführung*, [in:] *Bildlinguistik. Theorien — Methoden — Fallbeispiele*, eds. H. Diekmannshenke, M. Klemm, H. Stöckl, Berlin 2011, p. 23–42; H. Stöckl (ed.), *Mediale Transkodierungen. Metamorphosen zwischen Sprache, Bild und Ton*, Heidelberg 2010.

⁵⁰ Ch.S. Peirce, *The Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition*, Bloomington 1982, p. 186.

⁵¹ W.J. Mitchell, *Picture*.

⁵² T. Tomaszewicz, *Areas of Untranslatability in Audiovisual Transfers*, [in:] *Perspectives on Audiovisual Translation*, eds. Ł. Bogucki, K. Kredens, Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, Bruxelles, New York–Oxford–Wien 2010, p. 93–106.

⁵³ R. Jakobson, *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation*, [in:] *On translation*, eds. R.A. Brower, Cambridge 1959, p. 234f.

⁵⁴ U. Schmitz, *Sehflächenforschung*, p. 25.

⁵⁵ G. Antos, *Sprachdesign als Stil. Lifting oder: Sie werden die Welt mit anderen Augen sehen*, [in:] *Perspektiven auf Stil. Zum 60. Geburtstag von Barbara Sandig*, eds. E.M. Jakobs, A. Rothkegel, Tübingen 2001, p. 53; H. J. Bucher, *Multimodales Verstehen oder Rezeption als Interaktion. Theoretische und empirische Grundlagen einer systematischen Analyse der Multimodalität*, [in:] *Bildlinguistik. Theorie – Methoden – Fallbeispiele*, eds. H. Diekmannshenke, M. Klemm, H. Stöckl, Berlin 2011, p. 125.

which takes into account the phenomenological specificity of media text as a temporally and spatially limited phenomenon in digital discourse⁵⁶.

The media text, blend, as a conglomerate of textual, graphic and acoustic messages is subject to specific rules of understanding. H. Stöckl creates for such a phenomenon the notion of multimodal competence, as it mixes signs from different semiotic systems – verbal, paraverbal and non-verbal signs, which have to be interpreted differently due to the specificity of a given semiotic system⁵⁷. Verbal signs are representations in a specific linguistic code and convention, and may appear – depending on the message – as graphemes or phonemes. Paraverbal signs in blends include graphic layout, timbre, composition, voice intonation, sometimes linguistic production in a particular dialect or sociolect.

The components of an image or film in a media conglomerate together with the linguistic signs can be understood through the so-called “transcriptional intelligence”⁵⁸. H. Stöckl stresses that the former monomodal textual creation equipped with signs of one kind has ceased to exist in the digital age and has been replaced by multimodal texts. We should conclude by quoting Stöckl’s arguments regarding the complete equality of images and non-verbal texts in modern communication⁵⁹.

Firstly, verbal texts are a secondary product of civilization compared to images and pictorial messages, present from the beginning, hence images are processed faster than linguistic products, secondly, both types of messages are processed by the same mental procedures using scripts and mental models. Finally, picture-text-compounds achieve information saturation by complementing each other with the codes used in them, so that information deficiencies are bridged. H. Stöckl states that images appear in the environment in the form of streams, in a specific cognitive context, while verbal texts are by their nature fragmentary, linearly ordered. Graphic signs have primarily an iconic or symbolic function and are close to perception, while linguistic signs contained in texts are understood

⁵⁶ H.J. Bucher, *Multimodales*, p. 123; C. Thurlow, K. Mroczek, *Digital Discourse: Language in the New Media*, Oxford 2011, p. XX.

⁵⁷ H. Stöckl (ed.), *Mediale Transkodierungen*, p. 45.

⁵⁸ L. Jäger, *Transkriptivität. Zur medialen Logik der kulturellen Semantik*, [in:] *Transkribieren. Medien/ Lektüre*, eds. L. Jäger, G. Stanitzek, München 2002, p. 35.

⁵⁹ H. Stöckl (ed.), *Mediale Transkodierungen*, p. 47f.

arbitrarily and conventionally and, because of their secondary nature, are alien to perception.

The comprehension of graphic signs takes place in multiple ways, while linguistic signs, on the other hand, are comprehensible thanks to the thematic progression of the text and the application of the hermeneutic circle, conditioned by the linear ordering of the verbal text⁶⁰. The memorization of a graphic message also proceeds differently from the linearized verbal text. While an image is easily connected to emotions, a verbal text usually does not have such a connection, in addition, opaque alphabetic systems may cause additional difficulties. Despite the fact that images and verbal texts are mentally processed under the same mental procedures, they have a very different semantic value: verbal texts are usually unambiguous and shaped on the principles of logic and illocution, hence they can, for example, be contradicted, they can follow from each other and it is possible to ascertain their logical value without mistakes. Such unambiguity cannot be expected from images, especially with regard to their logical value. Possible graphic illocution is always contaminated by other semiotic messages; according to Stöckl, a graphic message even has “unlimited semantic scope”⁶¹. The contemporary media text used in communication, not necessarily electronic, is constructed of modules. Texts and images, it can be argued, are in an equal relationship and together form more complex semantic messages, so-called text-image complexes, blends, with multiple meanings⁶².

Linguistics noticed these differences quite early⁶³, but only recent years have brought research in the field of digital discourse and resulted in the emergence of online linguistics (in this field research is developing very fast, hence it would be difficult to list all publications, here I will mention only a few⁶⁴). The term blend described in this article is for example analyzed by C. Thurlow and K. Mroczek⁶⁵.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 48.

⁶¹ Ibid.

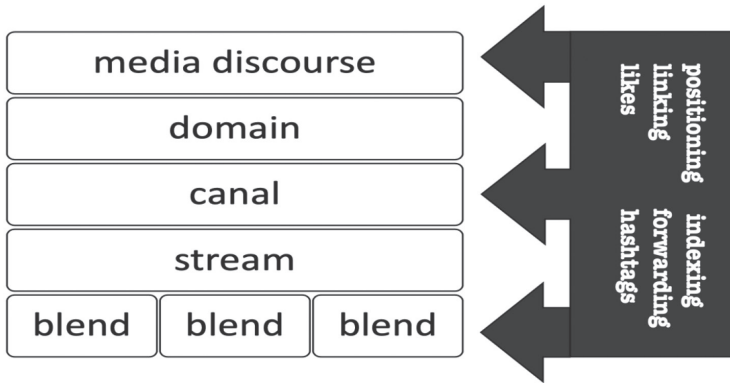
⁶² U. Schmitz, *Schflächenforschung*, p. 32.

⁶³ J. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Baltimore 1967.

⁶⁴ W. Czachur, *Diskursive Weltbilder im Kontrast. Linguistische Konzeption und Methode der kontrastiven Diskursanalyse deutscher und polnischer Medien*, Wrocław 2011; C. Fraas, S. Meier, Ch. Pentzold, *Zur Einführung: Perspektiven einer interdisziplinären transmedialen Diskursforschung*, [in:] *Online-Diskurse. Theorien und Methoden transmedialer Online-Diskursforschung*, eds. C. Fraas, S. Meier, C. Pentzold, Köln 2013, p. 7–34; Ch. Rowe, E.L. Wyss (eds.), *Language and New Media: Linguistic, Cultural and Technological Evolutions*, Michigan 2009; P. Sulikowski, *Intertextualität, Intersemiotizität und Interkulturalität eines Textes und seiner Übersetzung im medialen Zeitalter*, Hamburg 2021.

⁶⁵ C. Thurlow, K. Mroczek, *Digital Discourse*.

Digital discourse encompasses existing and new text genres, arranged according to different criteria than previously used divisions.



Pic. 4. The structure of media discourse

The media discourse is organized in a different way than the discourse in the previous view, as shown on the Pic. 4. The division into admins and users, as senders and receivers of information, plays an important role here. Equally important is the state of the information transmitted – It can be online or offline. The content and its representation are prioritized using quantifiable criteria, i.e. linking, forwarding, likes, which result in the subsequent positioning and indexing of the content in search engines, acting as cognitive procedures. Admin as a broadcaster can also sort information within a given domain, canal and stream by entering hashtags along with the blend, which to a large extent resemble search keywords in classical dictionaries and lexicons, although the result of such tagging is not transparent. The media discourse is multilingual, but in a new sense – the user accepts blends in different languages, even languages unknown to him personally, in better or worse automatic translation. However, taking into account the localization of blends in different semiotic systems, as described here, it will turn out that the majority of available blends do not need such a translation at all. The last feature of media discourse, which particularly affects its organization, is the labile and ephemeral nature of blends, which can be changed or deleted at any time, either by the admin or the moderator of a channel.

In summary, the changes that have taken place in the structure and organization of the media text, the equalization of the message in different semiotic systems – verbal, graphic, auditory with the simultaneous increasing withdrawal of the verbal component, the digitization of the message, multilingualism and multiculturalism, the labile, unknowable and unstable content of digital and media discourse certainly requires a reconstruction, or rather a deconstruction of the research apparatus of linguistics, building it anew taking into account the changes that have taken place in recent years.

A switch from the name linguistics would also have to be considered, since digital media have changed the definition of language, returning it to the state before the literacy of human civilization.

Piotr Sulikowski

Tekst medialny a konieczność lingwistyki obrazu

Artykuł zawiera zestawienie zmian paradygmatu tekstu w ostatnich 100 latach lingwistyki w skróconej formie z uwzględnieniem istniejących tendencji badawczych w danej epoce. Autor opisuje kształtujący się od lat 90. dwudziestego wieku tekst medialny, wskazuje na początki pojęcia w badaniach semiotycznych ostatnich dekad dwudziestego wieku, określa jego główne cechy charakterystyczne, zależności oraz proponuje nowy podział dyskursu medialnego. Wnioskiem z artykułu jest konieczność rozszerzenia zakresu badawczego lingwistyki, aby w badaniach empirycznych uwzględniać nowe składniki blendu i zależności pomiędzy nimi.

Keywords: image linguistics, text definition, blend, new media

Słowa kluczowe: lingwistyka obrazu, definicja tekstu, blend, new media