Formal Discourse of the 18ᵗʰ Century and the Internet Discourse of the 21ˢᵗ Century: Similarities and Differences

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Abstract − **The article is devoted to the comparative study of linguistic changes in the critical historical periods when radical political, socio-economic, cultural and ideological reformation causes underlying changes in the public consciousness, language and the conditions of its functioning. One of the historical periods is associated with the activities of Peter I and the transformation of all government-controlled spheres as well as that of society. The discourse of managerial public administration and records management becomes the one that rapidly changes during this historical period, and it is that discourse that encourages the development of new means of expression, genres and speaking etiquette. In the 21ˢᵗ century, the Internet discourse can be considered a special information and communication environment that develops specific mechanisms and means of interaction between communicants. These two types of discourse, each in their own time, become unique experimental platforms where new phenomena are being discussed and new genres introduced, which sets conditions for the activation of their donor function to feed other types of discourse.**

Keywords – formal discourse of the 18ᵗʰ century, Internet discourse of the 21ˢᵗ century, watershed periods of the Russian language development, cultural and linguistic situation

I. INTRODUCTION

The close connection of linguistic changes with socio-economic, cultural and historical conditions of its existence allows the scientists distinguishing between three types of language development: low (the period of stable socio-political development), intensive (the period of massive socio-political and economic changes as well as intensive cultural development and social uplift) and rapid (the period of social structure transformations) [1].

The periods of intensive and rapid development can be described as watershed, that is, when radical political, socio-economic, cultural and ideological reformations cause underlying changes in the public consciousness, language and the conditions of its functioning.

The watershed periods in the history of the Russian society and culture include the following:

the period between the end of the 10ᵗʰ and the beginning of the 11ᵗʰ century when Russia adopted Christianity which influenced the development of the new world view. It also

facilitated creation of new cultural concepts and caused advent of the Russian Slavic alphabet and writing;

the period between the end of the 17ᵗʰ and the first quarter of the 18ᵗʰ century associated with Peter's reforms which are preconditioned by the creation of a new cultural and linguistic environment, characterized by: active acquisition of new phenomena, birth of new genres, changes in the communicative situation, fixation and adaptation of the large number of lexical borrowings in the Russian language and active use of slavicisms in genre-defining, stylistic and etiquette functions, which were hitherto alien to them;

the period between the end of the 18th and the first decades of the 19ᵗʰ century, which highlighted the artistic discourse characterized by the most clear reflection of the contemporary cognitive, linguistic and communicative processes, among which was the secularization of Church Slavonic vocabulary [2].

the period of the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the creation of the Soviet state at the helm of which was atheistic ideology. These events moved the large part of Christian vocabulary towards periphery as well as played a significant role in the formation of new meanings for such lexico-semantic groups of words alien to them in the earlier periods.

the period of Perestroika and emergence of the Internet environment between the end of the 20ᵗʰ and the beginning of the 21ˢᵗ century.

Since changes in such historical periods concern not only language itself, but conditions of its use as well, "it is possible to discuss changes in the linguistic situation and emergence of new types of discourse" [3].

There are three main components of discourse that ensure its stability and require scientific understanding: communicative, cognitive and linguistic proper Multiple changes in each of them lead to the blurring of discourse as a coherent structure [4]. Describing the stages of the Russian language development in the period between the 19ᵗʰ and the 20ᵗʰ century, O.G. Revzina focuses on external and internal factors and linguistic processes which, on one hand, define specifics of the each historical stage of the Russian language development, while on the other hand, are pervasive for different stages of linguistic evolution [5].

This indicates the relevance of the comparative study of linguistic processes and phenomena in different historical periods. Thus, a wide range of problems and aspects of the Russian language functioning between the end of 20th and the beginning of the 21st century ends up being the main focus of scientists [6, 7]. In recent decades, one can notice intensified study of linguistic situation and phenomena at early and late socialism. Describing the linguistic situation of the mature socialism as a situation of diglossia, A.M. Krongauz draws parallels with the cases of diglossia that were present in Ancient Rus and Russia in the 18th century [8]. Researching the problem of adequate description of modern Russian speech etiquette peculiarities and its changes, A.D. Shmelev emphasizes the need for an objective assessment of the existing usage, which is possible only with consideration of the usage of previous periods [9].

For comparative research there is particular interest in types of discourse whose transformation in the critical periods of their development is so cardinal that it allows speaking of them as of experimental sites where new lexical-semantic, structural-grammatical, functional-stylistic and communicative-pragmatic phenomena are tested. In particular, special attention should be paid to lexical and semantic transformations and functional and stylistic rethinking of language elements that are reflected in the formal discourse of the 18th century and in the Internet discourse of the 21st century, which have not yet become the object of comparative study. The integral study of these discourses as links of a single developing Russian discursive space will help to identify patterns and trends that allow qualifying a certain discourse as a key for a particular era.

II. FORMAL DISCOURSE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The 18th century is rightly called the era of "radical transformation of the Russian language situation, covering all levels of the Russian language and all spheres of its functioning" [10]. The discourse which was rapidly acquiring a new form during the reign of Peter I was primarily the discourse of administrative and public administration and office work. During the pre-national era it was beyond the influence of book language culture. In the formal discourse of the Peter's era is characterized by desire to develop new means of expression, genres, speech etiquette; during this period occurs consolidation and adaptation of lexical borrowings that actively invaded the Russian language, slavonicisms are widely used in new, unusual for them functions: text-forming, genre-defining, stylistic and etiquette; elements of the Prikaz (departmental) language are transformed. As a result, there is a functional-semantic rethinking of heterogeneous language means and the creation of a new language space of the text.

In our opinion, the preservation of the formula *руку приложил* (lit. put the hand to it) in the final protocol of petition documents is suggestive. This formula is inherited from the departmental writing, while administrative, notification, reporting and executive documentation demonstrates a different form of the stated information confirmation, namely indicating a position, a surname and a name of a person certifying this information. In this respect, it is interesting to compare the official records of M.V. Lomonosov, among them official reports, submission documents of the scientist to the President

of the Academy of Sciences, signed in the following manner: «Professor Mikhailo Lomonosov» / «Academy of Sciences Professor Mikhailo Lomonosov» / «Imperial Academy adjunct Mikhailo Lomonosov» / «Collegiate councillor and professor Mikhailo Lomonosov» etc. Pleadings of the scientist, however, conclude with the wording "К сему прошению Михайло Ломоносов руку приложил" (lit. "To this pleading Mikhailo Lomonosov has put his hand") [11]. In the formal language, subordinate clauses with a relative pronoun *который* (which) that substitutes determinandum of the superordinate clause enhance their role a lot sooner than in happens in literary texts. Such constructs, while unknown to the literary language of the pre-national period, become consolidated in it as standard by the end of the thirties [12, p. 113]. In legislative acts, they become widely-used as soon as in the beginning of the century.

To understand the specifics of the discourse in question, two forms of its written representation, while indicating the hierarchy of its structure, gain importance: legislative acts and regional business documents. Linguistic innovations are earlier fixed in the legislative acts. Having been exposed to transformations in the first turn, the language of legislative acts served later as a model for local clerks.

Regional formal language demonstrates a wider range of possible interactions between originally diverse elements within one text: along with departmental language means, bookish slavonicisms, Western European borrowings, there is a wide use of colloquial speech elements in its regional and dialect diversity. The above mentioned aspects become the focus of active research in the works of scientists [13-16]. Attention to the issues of regional formal writing of the 17th and 18th centuries is preconditioned by increased interest of scientists in linguistic source studies, which allows raising the question of the regional linguistic variants. Today, the traditional research aspects of the regional formal writing of the 18th century, apart from the one of linguistic source studies, are lexicological and lexicographical aspects reflected in the works by E.R. Borisova, N.V. Vykhrystnyuk, N.V. Glukhikh, E.I. Golovanova, O.A. Gorban, A.G. Kosova, L.G. Panina, E.N. Polyakova, T.P Rogozhnikova, S.V. Rusanova, O.V. Trofimova, E.M. Sheptukhina and others.

Owing to the active transformations taking place in the formal discourse, it is that discourse that becomes one of the main donors, feeding other varieties of Russian discourse of the 18th century. Particularly noteworthy are clerical syntactic constructions notable by free mixing of departmental and bookish elements, which became popular. The influence of formal language on the language of newspaper, journalism and drama at Peter's time is studied by O.V. Nikitin. In this vein, dramatic works of the era popularize such syntactic formulas as "*Понеже…*; *Того ради…*; *Сего ради…*; *Чего ради…*" (lit "For...; Therefore..., Wherefore..., What for...") [17].

Of course, the expansion of the formal language scope could not but affect the linguistic taste of society. It is no coincidence that the issue of the «scrivener» language attracted debate among the literary elite of the 18th century, who defined it as abnormal and destructive for the speech culture. The scrivener language is known to have been criticized by A.P. Sumarokov and V.K. Trediakovsky. Indicative is the fact that scientists and

writers aspired to leaving behind bureaucratic clichés, among which was, for instance, the archaic conjunction *понеже* (lit. for this reason, because). Thus, according to V.M. Zhivov, Lomonosov and Sumarokov did not use this word since 1750s [10, p. 304].

III. INTERNET DISCOURSE OF THE 21ST CENTURY

The actualization of formal discourse in Russia in the 18th century can be attributed to the period of the second information revolution associated with the emergence and development of printing. Consequently, the Internet discourse of the 21st century is a vivid manifestation of the third information revolution, the era of rapid development of computers, high technology and the Internet.

On the one hand, it is impossible to disagree that "language and technology have been deeply intertwined ever since the invention of writing some 5,000 years ago" [18], however, on the other hand, "Electric means of moving of information are altering our typographic culture as sharply as print modified medieval manuscript and scholastic culture" [19].

As N. Baron argues, "today, digital technologies allow people speaking or writing either synchronously or asynchronously, with participants either at a distance or in close proximity notes. These changes make the nature of spatial and temporal context in electronically mediated communication" more complex [20]. In addition to a specific chronotope, modern Internet discourse has other features that really allow referring to it as a new speech formation. These include:

- the presence of an electronic signal as a communication channel;

- high speed of information dissemination;

- virtuality;

- hypertextuality;

- interactivity;

- polysemiotic character;

- polydiscursive character.

Strengthening of oral and colloquial elements can be considered another striking feature of Internet discourse. This feature has a huge impact on the formation and functioning of the so-called "Internet language". D. Crystal characterized the essence of this phenomenon by the original formula: "speech + writing + electronically mediated properties" This means of communication is more than just a hybrid of writing and speech; it can be called the third medium of communication [21]. According to O. Soffer, this oral-written text ostensibly reflects the melting processes of linguistic structures, recalling the changes that occurred to other social structures in the late modern era [22]. The oral features of these digital texts include abbreviations, elements of function, replacement of letters with numbers that have a similar sound, imitation of sounds, etc [21].

Thus, there is no doubt that the Internet today is a special information and communication environment that develops specific mechanisms and means of interaction between communicants.

IV. IMPACT OF INTERNET DISCOURSE ON NON-NETWORK COMMUNICATION

With the development and spread of the Internet in modern society, it is beginning to have an increasing impact on non-network communication: it would seem that traditional social practices are being transformed; the psychology of communication and the strategies of established speech behavior are changing. Innovations of Internet discourse (emoticons, acronyms, memes, hashtags, etc.) penetrate the language of everyday life, change the style of traditional media and even scientific communication.

As N.B. Mechkovskaya notes, the following groups of facts can be the evidence of the Internet communication and its codes expansion into ordinary communication:

- the sign of the Internet in a relatively special meaning is found in conventional media, literary texts, oral non-networked speech (*link, file, hacker, etc.*);

- Internet-word or phrase is included in the general non-terminological dictionary with its specialized meaning, i.e. the term of the informatics field became known and easily understood outside of the computer professions (*bug, lag, etc.*);

- the Internet sign has acquired a meaning that goes beyond special communication (*download, connect, hang, etc.*) [23].

Network communication phenomena such as memes and hashtags spread beyond the Internet and largely form the linguistic taste of society, especially that of young people. Internet meme is understood as "short piece of information (a word or phrase, image, etc.), which instantly and unexpectedly became fashionable and is being actively reproduced on the Internet, including new contexts or situations" [24]. Shifman highlights three attributes ascribed to the meme concept. First, memes may best be understood as cultural information that passes along from person to person, yet gradually scales into a shared social phenomenon; the second one second is that they reproduce by various means of imitation; the third is their diffusion through competition and selection [25].

The penetration of Internet memes into non-Internet discourses occurs at the final stages of their «life cycle»: a meme loses its ability to replicate and creatively transform itself and becomes a unit of language turning into a set expression, a phraseological unit, which is actively used outside of the Internet environment [26]. For instance, many syntactic memes, such as *«that feel, when...»*, *«one does not simply...»* have long been used in colloquial speech, advertising texts and media materials and are no longer recognized by native speakers as genuine memes. Recently, the seemingly forgotten memes *«son of mother's friend»* and *«I have paws for hands [thus I'm not suitable for the task]»* have received a new lease of life. They are used in the sense of stylistic means of expression, but also play the role of core cultural signs that must be easily understandable to a very wide audience.

A hashtag became another phenomenon, actively functioning in the non-virtual environment. Having expanded beyond the social networks, the hashtag has acquired new

attributes: it is no more a mere thematic marker of the message, but also a striking means of expression that performs evaluative and expressive functions and a means of self-presentation and promotion of something. Interestingly, hashtags are now being used as proper nouns outside the Internet, and not exclusively in entertainment (TV show titled #СеняФедя), but also within the scientific discourse (collection of articles adapted from the Total dictation titled #тотсборник).

All of the above suggests that, despite the mixed feelings towards the Internet discourse in society, today it can claim the status of a donor discourse, actively feeding other Russian discourses in the 21st century.

V. CONCLUSION

Thus, despite the serious time gap between two discourses in question and their largely opposite properties and functions, they do have a certain similarity:

it is in Modern times (from the 18th century to the present day) that European literary languages, including Russian, start to attribute themselves to the democratic type of languages: they do not oppose colloquial speech, but include it as the lower register of «cultivated» speech use. For the national language, the literary form of which is focused on colloquial speech, there is a tendency to an increasing permeability of the boundaries between literary language and non-normative forms of language existence (dialects, colloquialism) [27], which are observed in the formal discourse of the 18th century, and in the Internet discourse of modern times;

due to the active transformations taking place in these discourses and the increase in their influence on the communicative social space, both of them can claim the status of a donor discourse, feeding other discourses.

Summarizing the above mentioned aspects, the authors note note that the comparative study of the Russian language functioning process in the watershed periods of its development is promising, because it allows paying attention to a number of features and patterns:

1) a new type of discourse is being introduced in the watershed periods of language development primarily due to extralinguistic reasons. New phenomena are actively absorbed within this new discourse;

2) intensive changes in such discourse result in further intensification of donor function feeding other types of discourse;

3) the impact of such discourse on society as well as on the formation of social and linguistic consciousness is due to its conceptual and communicative potential.

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