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**THE POLEMIC DISCOURSE OF PRINT MEDIA:  
TO THE DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPT**

*This article analyzes the polemic nature of the print media discourse, establishing structural-compositional, cognitive-semantic and communicative-pragmatic features of the polemic component in the plane of the discourse being studied. The definition of the polemic discourse of print media is given.*

**Key words:** *polemic, dispute, discussion, polemical genre, polemical component, polemical discourse of print media.*

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**ПОЛЕМИЧЕСКИЙ ДИСКУРС ПЕЧАТНЫХ СМИ:  
К ОПРЕДЕЛЕНИЮ ПОНЯТИЯ**

*В данной статье анализируется полемическая природа дискурса печатных СМИ, устанавливаются структурно-композиционные, когнитивно-семантические и коммуникативно-прагматические признаки полемического компонента в плоскости изучаемого дискурса. Дается определение полемического дискурса печатных СМИ.*

**Ключевые слова:** *полемика, спор, дискуссия, полемический жанр, полемический компонент, полемический дискурс печатных СМИ.*

For centuries, polemics, which is a product of complex speech and mental activity based on differences in views and opinions of participants in communication, whose goal is not only to express and justify their point of view, but also to refute the position of the interlocutor, has aroused undying interest among representatives of various scientific fields. At the present stage of development of society, polemics is especially in demand, since issues resolved in the course of polemic communication contribute to the adoption of important decisions, “which will contribute to the improvement of the living standard of society, the development of science and technology, the harmonization of human

relations and mutual understanding of subjects of speech communication” [1]. However, it should be remembered that the polemic nature of a text can be both “innate” and “acquired”, that is, some texts are polemic in nature, such as a polemic article in scientific discourse. Other texts, in our opinion, acquire a polemic component when they become part of a particular discourse. That is, we can speak about polemic genres, the polemics of which can have varying degrees of expression/intensity. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to identify the features of the manifestation of polemics in a particular genre of text, which are structural elements of the discourse of print media and endow it with a polemic character.

As M. M. Bakhtin rightly noted, “the genre is always both this and that, always old and new at the same time. The genre is revived and renewed at each new stage in the development of literature and in each individual work of a given genre... The genre lives in the present, but always remembers its past, its beginning. The genre is a representative of creative memory in the process of literary development” [2]. Let us supplement this wonderful idea with the statement of academician D. S. Likhachev, who wrote that “genres do not live independently of each other, but constitute a certain system that changes historically” [3]. In this sense, the genre is a historical category.

The modern system of journalistic genres is a dynamically developing structure, within which there are internal and external connections. The internal connection between different genres of journalism is due to a single type of creativity – a journalistic one, and the external connection is due to the fact that each genre of journalism, unlike, for example, the literary genre, is always generated by the needs of reflecting modern life in order to influence public opinion. This is what remains to this day as the system-forming characteristics of journalistic genres [4].

The search for new forms that would most effectively contribute to the implementation of these functions led to modifications in the system of genres, which in turn could not but affect the development of new types of discourses within the framework of mass media discourse. One of such discourses is the polemic discourse of print media. When studying it, it is important, first of all, to consider its polemic nature.

According to scientists, polemics, discussion, and dispute are forms of argumentative communication. At the same time, the sign of identity is not placed between them, but the inextricable connection and interpenetration of these concepts is confirmed. Thus, polemics and

discussion reveal similarities among themselves in that they contain a certain thesis underlying disagreements, which are resolved in the course of communicative interaction by applying a certain set of techniques.

A dispute, being a competition for an idea, a thought [5], also has similarities with polemics in that it is a discussion of any issue on any topic.

Dictionaries give the following definitions of the concepts in question:

“Polemics is a verbal competition when discussing something, in which each side defends its opinion, its rightness. Bickering, quarrel caused by disagreement over something. Duel, battle, confrontation. To have polemics – to argue, to argue with someone, proving something. To fight something, to resist something” [3].

“Dispute is a dispute when discussing scientific, artistic, political, etc. issues” [5, p. 257].

“Discussion is a free public discussion of any controversial issue” [6, p. 402].

We agree with I. D. Borchenko and V. N. Makashova that “dispute can result in a quarrel, which is unacceptable in discussion, and polemics is a dispute. Discussion implies a trusting attitude towards each other, as well as a solution to any problem or issue. But the elements of dispute and polemics were nevertheless absorbed by the discussion” [7, p. 16].

At the same time, we would like to add that the differences between these forms lie in their goals: the goal of the discussion is to find a common agreement, something that unites different points of view, the goal of the polemics is to assert one of the opposing positions, the goal of the dispute is to achieve the truth.

Thus, from a linguistic point of view, the following distinctions can be made between the concepts under consideration. In accordance with the communicative-pragmatic and structural characteristics, we can say that “polemics is a dialogic (oral and written) communication of subjects competent in a specific field of activity who have different (opposite) points of view regarding the issue under discussion, with the aim of asserting their position and refuting the other with the help of sufficient and convincing argumentation” [8]. The presence of an opposing idea or opinion underlying the polemics characterizes the latter as a spontaneous and unpredictable verbal struggle that has no restrictions on time and the number of participants.

A dispute, being a discussion of any issue on any topic in an oral or written dialogical form, in contrast to polemics, can include types of public “intellectual” interaction (polemics, discussion, disputation, debate), and types of interaction of subjects in everyday life (altercation,

quarrel, bickering) [1]. The dispute covers various spheres of life of the participants in communication and is not limited by regulations.

A discussion, representing an oral or written dialogical “communicative interaction of subjects, based on resolving an issue within a specific topic in order to determine the truth or get closer to it” [1], takes place according to certain rules, regulations, where participants use the correct techniques when discussing a specific topic in a limited time period.

Speaking about the linguistic features of polemics, dispute and discussion, we should also note both similarities and differences. Thus, polemics is characterized by a high level of evaluativeness and expressiveness, expressed in the predominance of emotive vocabulary, figurative means (epithets, metaphors, personification, etc.). A large place in the text can be occupied by words of various thematic groups, depending on what topic the article is devoted to. At the syntactic level, the most common expressive means of syntax are rhetorical questions, exclamations, antithesis, etc.

The dispute is characterized by the following linguistic picture: verbs in a negative form, negative adverbs and pronouns, adversative conjunctions, a negative particle and phraseological units with a negative meaning. The affirmative-exclamatory nature of the remarks predominates.

The discussion is characterized by intermittency of speech, interruption of thought, the use of paratactic additions, isolation of syntactic blocks and parenthesis, the movement of verbs and parts of the predicate into preposition. A characteristic feature of the discussion is also the presence of repetitions, clarifications, additions, the use “in oral speech of a much larger number than in written speech of particles and modal words that perform a contact-establishing function and act as indicators of an adequate understanding of the statement, since each modal particle has own lexical meaning and scope of use” [9]. In comparison with polemics and disputes, the discussion seems less expressive, but no less informative.

However, it should be remembered that the verbalization of the communicative space in which polemics, disputes or discussions are realized will be directly dependent on the genre of the text in the plane of which these types of communication are realized, and its linguistic and cultural characteristics, i. e. belonging of the addresser and the addressee to representatives of a particular linguistic culture. Therefore, within the framework of a particular linguistic space, taking into account the genre in which polemics, disputes or discussions are realized, there will be

observed its own characteristics, which are important to establish in order to obtain the clearest possible idea of the genre repertoire of a particular sphere of human activity and its communicative-pragmatic, structural and linguistic characteristics.

Transferring the polemics to the sphere of print media discourse, we observe a certain kind of transformation in the nature of this phenomenon as a whole, and, as a consequence, transformation in the polemical nature of the genres of the printed press, which can be explained by objective reasons – the social reorganization of a particular country, the change of monoideology to pluralism of opinions, the competitive struggle of publications for the speed of information transmission, exclusivity in the presentation of news or their commentary, technological progress (the growing popularity of the Internet, streaming platforms, etc.), etc. Against the background of genre transformations, transformation is also taking place in the polemic nature of certain genres, when polemics in the literal sense of the term fades into the background, as it seems quite aggressive within the framework of one publication, as well as being limited to the printed word, which reduces reader interest, and a convergence of polemics with discussion and dispute occurs. That is, there is a hybridization of the goals of polemics, discussion and dispute, which leads to the emergence of a new goal of polemics in the print media – clarifying and comparing different points of view, searching, identifying the true opinion, finding the right solution to the issue, problem by defending your point of view, refuting the opponent's opinion, proposing one's own vision of the situation and ways to solve it, i. e. solution of current socio-economic, political, environmental, etc. problems through contrasting different points of view. This goal is realized within the framework of the polemic discourse of the print media, which we understand as one of the institutional types of discourse, whose cognitive-communicative space is represented by a set of coherent written texts, statements of participants in a certain polemic situation, united by the concept of “problem”. The polemic discourse includes texts of polemic genres published in the press and/or the Internet, as well as a number of publications by other journalists and/or readers' responses to them and to other readers' responses that appeared in the same media. Each text of the polemic genre is characterized by the presence in it of a polemic component, which is characterized by structural-compositional features (the presence of such blocks as the problem statement, the evaluation block, the commentary, the opinion), cognitive-semantic features (lexical units, in which semes are isolated by analyzing dictionary

definitions, having the meanings 'dispute', 'discussion', 'question', 'problem', 'squabble', 'confrontation', 'opinion', forming the semantic field of polemics) and communicative-pragmatic features (lexical units with semantics of disagreement, untruth, opposition, markers of negation, linguostylistic units with the meaning of opposition, lexical units with the semantics of a negative assessment, as well as special stylistic devices and means of polemic imagery (irony, etc.), included in the contrasting way of constructing sentences in the text as parts of the structural-compositional block of the polemic component), verbalized through certain linguistic means and having the density index, the intensity index and the expressiveness index.

Depending on the arithmetic average of the three indices of the indicated characteristics, the polemic discourse of the print media is divided into high-intensive (core), medium-intensive (near periphery) and low-intensive (far periphery) one and is represented by a certain set of genres of the printed press.

Thus, the polemic nature of the print media discourse is determined by the presence in its structure of a polemic component, which is characterized by structural-compositional, cognitive-semantic and communicative-pragmatic features. These characteristics are measured through indices, the arithmetic average of which allows us to determine the core, near and far peripheries of the discourse under study. The results obtained indicate the presence of polemic genres in the structure of the print media discourse, the polemical nature of which is natural or acquired and allows us to characterize the print media discourse as a high-intensive, medium-intensive and low-intensive one.

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