

Sarcastic evaluation in mass media as a way of discrediting a person: Greta Thunberg case

Yulia Konyaeva

Saint-Petersburg State University Russia
j.konyaeva@spbu.ru

Anastasiya Samsonova

Saint-Petersburg State University, Russia
st043264@student.spbu.ru

Abstract

The article is devoted to the analysis of a sarcastic evaluation of a person, which leads to their discrediting in media texts. Sarcastic evaluation is considered in terms of linguistic praxeology: the language and compositional means of nomination, description, and actions are analysed. In a media text, these means interact with the means of expressing the category of deviance and forming semantic nodes. The category of deviance can manifest itself, on the one hand, in exuberance or the absurd, while on the other, in simplification or insufficiency of the sign revelation. Also, specific sarcastic speech techniques are identified. They are based on the discrepancy of referent and illocutionary meanings in the person's speech portrait. The study of Russian media discourse about Swedish eco-activist Greta Thunberg revealed the active use of linguistic means expressing sarcastic evaluation to demonstrate the opposing viewpoint in relation to the transmitted semantic position of "Other". When the media represents Greta in the totality of her disadvantages, this enters into a polemic against those who support the ideas of this person. With the help of sarcasm, the media shows the absurdness and failure of these ideas. In this case, a sarcastic evaluation becomes an instrument of discrediting not only the person him/herself, but also his/her views and associates. Linguistic means of sarcastic evaluation are widely represented in discrediting media texts. The most important of them are means such as absurdity, hyperbole, alogism, simplification, etc.

Keywords: sarcasm, humour, linguistic praxeology, discrediting, speech representation.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, humour is used in almost all public discourse: political communication (Musloff 2017), Internet mailing lists (Raskin 2012), TV shows (Dynel 2012; Arampatzis 2012), advertisements (Okada 2012), and, of course, journalism (Chovanec 2012), including news

communication (Vasileva & Ivanova 2020). A few decades ago, scientists considered humour as a way to draw attention to a topic “without increasing the comprehension and acceptance of a message” (Goldstein 1993: 246). Presently, mass media often employ comic resources to transmit certain representations of the world. Researchers of modern media discourse note that humour can be used to facilitate the perception of content (Chattoo & Green-Barber 2018), to demonstrate metatextual interactions, and to actualize the event (Vasileva & Ivanova 2020). In our research we focus on manipulative function of humour, including the use of humour in fake news (Peifer & Myrick 2019). Humour can be perceived as having a manipulative purpose to demonstrate the inability or absurdity of the social way to solve a significant problem in order to discredit it in front of the mass audience. Journalists argue with society as a whole and with some specific groups through the text. Often the opposition “us-them” is revealed in the use of sarcastic evaluation, which may take the form of mocking an event, situation, or person, and become an instrument of the discrediting. The novelty of our approach is in the study of linguistic instruments for creating sarcastic evaluation of a person in a media text.

The purpose of the article is to reveal the devices of sarcastic evaluation in contemporary media discourse used in order to discredit a person and their ideas. To achieve this purpose, we formed the research logic of the material analysis, including semantic and praxeological methods (Duskaeva 2019), which allow demonstrating the specifics of the speech actions transmitting the polemic nature of the sarcastic evaluation of a person in media discourse.

The media represent a person as part of an objective reality and demonstrate the person’s social significance. In this regard, the appeal to a person in the media has a vector character: it allows broadcasting the person’s ideas and expressing an attitude towards them. To confirm this hypothesis, we looked at Russian socio-political online media resources. Employing the method of controlled selection we chose 50 texts from the years 2019 and 2020. The presented media differ in ideological orientation: liberal (*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, *Snob*, *Republic*), pro-state (*Tsargrad*), neutral (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Vzglyad*), and a resource that publishes fake news for entertainment purposes (*Panorama*). We collected media texts with the keyword “Greta Thunberg” and further selected the texts where sarcastic evaluation was a means of creating a portrait of her as the “voice of eco-activists”¹. We chose Greta Thunberg here because, in Russian media discourse, her name is prevalent, mythologized and emotionally intense (Bykova 2020). The image of Greta Thunberg in the media is conflicting, and is used not so much to express the position of eco-activism, but rather to oppose the traditionalist society: Greta Thunberg is an “angry girl”. Therefore, as noted by Russian researchers, this image “was readily accepted by mass culture and, as expected, replicated in memes, photos, slogans, printed on T-shirts and stickers, drawn by artists, and sung by musicians” (Semedov & Sukhareva 2020).

The selected media texts are characterized by the presence of expressive value assessments of Greta Thunberg. Therefore, the use of comic means can become a way to manipulate public opinion, in particular through a sarcastic evaluation of a particular person. Certainly, we cannot show the specifics of all the studied texts in one article, so we limit ourselves to explaining only the most common features.

¹ Greta Thunberg is a Swedish schoolgirl and eco-activist. She became widely known after her speech at the UN Climate Change Conference in September, 2019. She was awarded TIME Magazine’s “Person of the Year” award in 2019.

2. Research context

There are many definitions of sarcasm. Some scholars believe that it is not possible to create a definition of irony or sarcasm (Filatova 2012: 392) because these terms have regional specifics and change over time. However, different scientific disciplines have their own definitions of sarcasm. We base ourselves on the position that sarcasm is “a term in rhetoric and general use for sneeringly ironic remarks... Sarcasm serves to taunt and deflate. It often stems from resentful and embittered insecurity, but is also used by people in authority (such as teachers and army instructors) as a means of marking and maintaining that authority” (McArthur 1992: 643). Such an approach means that most scholars agree on the key features of sarcasm: its link to irony aiming at indignity, special communicative status of the laughing object that places them above the object of mockery in the position of “authority”. A number of ideas seem quite arguable, producing the discussion around the object of ridicule. Thus, the question of the qualification of the sarcastic phenomenon is arguable, because it is perceived as a kind of utterance, “sharp ironic humour; a shadow of laughter with a bitter taste; especially humiliating utterance” (Borev 1970: 100) or as a trope, “structurally, sarcasm is close to tropes, to one of their kinds – irony” (Mann 1971: 659). Nevertheless, most scholars agree that sarcasm is a kind of irony. In *Rhetoric to Alexander* (Aristotle 1924), sarcasm is defined as one of the four kinds of irony (along with wittiness, mockery, and jokes). This point of view was supported by later rhetoricians (Lomonosov 1952) and critics such as Belinsky (Belinskiy 1956) studying the practical use of sarcasm. Contemporary scholars of humour also speak about the correlation between the notions of “irony” and “sarcasm”:

Sarcasm is generally considered a nasty, mean-spirited or just relatively negative form of verbal irony, used on occasion to enhance the negativity expressed relative to direct, non-figurative criticism.

(Colston 2017: 236)

Nevertheless, sarcasm is a phenomenon, studied to a lesser degree than irony, which is due to, firstly, its nature of “mean and venomous irony” as well as a greater personalization and “a high degree of language personality criticism” (Dyrin 2012). The specifics of how sarcasm functions in text calls for distinguishing it from irony. One of the approaches is connected with the notion of textual conflict. In researchers’ opinions, if irony is built with the contrast of the implied, then sarcasm is conflict-bearing, aimed at destroying the communicator and deliberately accepting the fact of spoilt relations (Vavilova 2010: 149). According to some scientists, sarcasm is always negative, while irony can be positive (Giora & Attardo 2014; Alba-Juez & Attardo 2014). As Alba-Juez supposes, that verbal irony can be classified into three types: 1) negative irony, 2) positive irony, and 3) neutral irony. According to this classification, sarcasm refers to negative irony (Alba-Juez, 2014: 150-151).

Another approach is based on the distinguished notions from the point of view of the speaker’s intentions. Thus, according to Haiman (1998), sarcasm is always deliberate, which is not necessary for irony. The third approach considers that sarcasm is always aimed at a person; it has a “victim”, differing from irony (Pishwa 2009). Irony and sarcasm have a common bivalent nature: contradiction of the spoken and the implied – two scripts in terms of Raskin (1985) and Attardo (2017).

Some researchers follow the idea that sarcasm (in a similar way to irony) is “the means of qualification of the communicated utterance and the way to reveal the emotional reaction, which is a semantic foundation of modality” (Skorobach 2018: 82–83). We also note that some suppose that it is especially important to study how lexical means influence the interpretation of sarcasm (Utsumi 2000, Kreuz & Caucci 2007) and explore the effects of applying of tropes (Kreuz &

Roberts 1995). According to these authors, it is the lexical aspect of a sarcastic utterance that determines its pragmatic meaning. Following them, we also pay attention to the lexical component of sarcastic statements. Within the communicative stylistics, sarcasm is also understood as a tactic following the strategies of discrediting and dysphemism (Mishlanov & Netsvetaeva 2009; Truganova 2001; Sidelnikova 2016).

The bivalent nature of sarcasm, as mentioned above, appears at the clash of two scripts: expected and contextual. So, sarcasm is based on the phenomenon of speech paradox and may be expressed with the same means as irony:

- lexical units where the ironic expressive element is objectively a part of the semantic structure (noted as ironic in lexicographic sources) and units obtaining the ironic component in the situational context (Mukhina 2006).
- tropes and figures of speech, such as comparison, antithesis, hyperbole, litotes, the grotesque, pun, oxymoron, alogism, paradox, parody, caricature, etc.
- means of intertextuality, for example quotations, allusions, reminiscences (Shilikhina 2008).

However, there is still a poorly studied question concerning the instruments of sarcastic evaluation expression of various real aspects (events, situations, people) from the point of view of linguistic praxeology aimed at building effective communication. This is the research question that we will explore in this study.

3. Methods of analysis

In our research we use linguistic praxeological analysis of media text (Duskaeva 2018) as the main method with four main objectives: 1) to study peculiarities of the media text linguistic instruments; 2) to reveal the basic communicative actions and identify their specific details; 3) to reveal the principles of text functioning in media sphere; 4) to evaluate the effectiveness of speech instruments in a wide variety of language and communicative means.

Building the analytical logic of a sarcastic evaluation of a person in a media text, we use the analysis method of genre semantic-stylistic category of personality (Duskaeva & Konyaeva 2017). This method involves determining the main semantic units to create the basis of a person's portrait, and then distinguishing the subfields of the personality category (nomination, description and actions), to determine the core and peripheral language means that form the linguistic specificity of the portrait of a particular person. As expressive means of the personality category interact in the media text with the expressive means of the dialogue and evaluation categories, we trace the specifics of the author's subjectiveness. The material analysis shows that the category of deviance, as a means of expressing sarcastic evaluation in the media text is manifested in absurdity and excitedness, but also in oversimplification and insufficiency of the sign revelation. The next step of the analysis is connected with specific speech devices, based on the discrepancy between referent and illocutionary meanings in the person's portrait, which allows the transmission of the sarcastic evaluation within discourse. We shall demonstrate this using material analysis.

4. Results and discussion

The discourse under consideration demonstrates that in the model of depicting the Swedish schoolgirl Greta Thunberg, it is not only the person who is important, but also the ideas that she speaks about. In Russian media discourse, Greta Thunberg is often presented as a puppet who echoes the modern and popular ideas of ecological activists. Thus, the mockery of the person

becomes the way to express media's intended attitude towards populist approach in solving ecological problems. By mocking Greta Thunberg, media in fact demonstrate the failure of ecological ideas that she pronounces. This portrait is created with a certain set of semantic units. Among these units are emotions and related reactions to external and internal impact, the person's physiological condition, and physical actions that describe the person's protest activity and transmit her speech (we use the typology of semantic units by Apresyan 1995). The texts make subfields of language and compositional means of nomination, description and actions which then interact with the expressive means of the deviance category, and create various tools of a personal sarcastic evaluation. We shall consider every subfield, finding special means of sarcastic evaluation of a person in each one.

4.1. Nomination

The core expressive means of nomination in the text are nouns: proper nouns that emphasize the object of representation in the text, and common nouns which present the nature of Thunberg's activity. In the studied material, neutral nominations are created with the syntax "name+surname", as well as the professional nomination ecological activist, are essential to discourse. The nominations, which are neutral at first sight, may obtain a more strongly expressed evaluative meaning in the context. For example, denomination and the plural number of nouns (when Greta Thunberg becomes the synonym of ecological activity) demonstrates the exuberant activity of this social group:

It is a shame to fly": Why 'greta thunbergs' gang up on the planes ... Greta is not the only and the first. Ecological activists have been ganging up on aviation for a long time
(Komsomolskaya Pravda, 10/07/2019)

The repetition of *gang up on*, in this case, makes the author's mockery obvious.

Another tool to make neutral nomination absurd is connected with its inclusion in a logical line of other neutral nominations. The author's sarcasm is obvious in the context of *May the anti-Christ come: love Greta Thunberg and Olga Buzova*. The alogism is the foundation for building the mockery: in the author's opinion, their "use" for society makes the characters similar:

But *Greta Thunberg* would not rule if there were not a demand for that. What lies within her triumph? The same thing that is within the magnificent success of *Olga Buzova* in Russia. Both *Greta* and *Olga* seem special (such euphemisms are used in this politically correct time). Watching them, a person – even the most unattractive one – feels better. *Greta* and *Buzova* are needed by society to hide its total degradation. No, you are not stupid and not ill. You are smart and beautiful. Don't believe it? Look at *Greta* and *Buzova*.

(Moskovsky Komsomolets, 09/25/2019)

The situation in which the names of eco-activist Greta Thunberg and the most popular Runet blogger Olga Buzova (media often ridicule her, pointing out her intellectual limitations and lack of talent) appear in one sentence is already perceived as comical. The mention of nominations of people who are completely unrelated to each other in one context leads to alogism, which marks the text with sarcastic overtones. The conjunctions, linking nominations, work to increase the comic effect.

The demonstration of discrepancy in nominations is also shown by accentuating her age: 'girl', 'girl Greta', 'girl Thunberg', 'blessed 16-year-old Greta Thunberg', 'angry Swedish girl', 'hysterical girl', 'wonderful girl from Sweden', 'child', 'modest girl', 'girl-ecological

activist’, and many others. Greta Thunberg’s immaturity is obvious in contrast with the surrounding environment and the nature of her activity:

But time passed by and suddenly *the girl* appeared at *the ecological forum* in Poland where she *wagged her finger from the tribune at the adult men in costumes* and demanded they “return her future”, and the other day she stepped onto *the tribune in Davos* and spoke exactly the same way, but with a greater frenetic tone in her voice.

(Vzglyad, 01/30/2020)

Mockery is built with the antithesis ‘*girl*’ – ‘*adult men in costumes*’ as well as with the demonstration of actions, common for a spoiled child (*wagged her finger*), not for a “horn” of ecological movement. The evaluative component refines the categorical semantics with nominations with brightly expressed negative-evaluative meaning (young fanatic with a sick mind, young hysterical girl, possessed Greta, etc.). In a neutral context, such nominations strip the author’s sarcasm aimed not against a single person, but against the widely spread idea of addressing an ecological problem. This is what the author argues with:

It is obvious, this is just *a young fanatic with a sick mind, young hysterical girl*, able to encourage people with her hysteria. *Such people* appear at critical times. And those who gather round such strong impulses of energy – and the wildest energy is streaming from her – go into a trance and follow her.

(Komsomolskaya Pravda, 09/26/2019)

Controversy increases with the use of the demonstrative pronoun *such*, sarcastically presenting Greta Thunberg as chosen and able to influence the crowd.

4.2. Description

The description of a person is constructed around the description of their appearance and surroundings (environment, people, etc.). The whole portrait of a person is formed with a complex of means: external details, underlined by the author of the text are incorporated into the text in accordance with author’s intention. The main means expressing the categorical meaning are the words with the subject semantics, the periphery consists of numerals, proper names, action verbs of emotional interaction, etc. Sarcasm in Greta Thunberg’s descriptions is formed around some semantic units, which receive a special reconsideration in the context.

Thunberg’s most characteristic physical feature is the plaited pigtail, which shows her young age, but at the same time it is taken by the media as the symbol of both her physical ugliness and the absurdity (even danger) of her ideas:

Totalitarian ethic, totalitarian culture – it seems that the twentieth century might have taught humanity to tell *this filth* at birth, but it looks that humanity can see only the *swastika* or *the hammer and sickle*, but if it is *a pigtail*, humanity loses confidence – indeed, there was nothing about *pigtails* in the prompt from the lessons of history.

(Republic.ru, 09/25/2019)

As we can see, the expression of negative evaluation of a person is closely connected with the mentioned external feature: absurdity is shown with the description *pigtail* in the same sentence as *swastika* and *hammer and sickle*, sarcastically hinting at the possible consequence of such ideas.

Sarcastic evaluation is also transmitted with the fake descriptions of simplification from Greta herself:

I persuaded my parents to move around the country and to live in *an igloo*. We will live the way our ancestors did... Yes, when I get back to Stockholm, we will *harness our deer* and ride out of town.
(IA Panorama, 09/25/2019)

By employing activists' ideas of ecological housing and the sustainable transportation, the text author hyperbolizes them, making them absurd and less attractive for the audience: ecological houses are transformed into igloos, and ecological transport, into a deer sledge.

The psychological condition of Greta Thunberg is also strongly mocked:

On the 23rd of September there was a scandalous speech at the UN climate summit in New York delivered by Swedish schoolgirl-slacker Greta Thunberg, *the girl with Asperger's syndrome, who was turned into the "icon" of global youth ecological movement* and a possible Noble prize winner by adults staying in the shadows.

(Tsargrad, 09/30/2019)

Such descriptions (*the girl with Asperger's syndrome, schizoid personality disorder, pervasive developmental disorders, etc.*), brightly showing the psychological problems of Greta, are aimed at demonstrating the abnormality of perceiving Greta's ideas as worth paying attention to. Absurdity is revealed through the comparison of the high status of the event to the psychological instability of the person, and her thoughts seem even more dependent and enforced:

In fact, this girl *should not be standing at the UN meeting*, as she herself mentioned. She *should be examined by a good psychiatrist and take pills*. These crusades for ecology will not be good for health.

(Komsomolskaya Pravda, 09/26/2019)

The demonstration of her illiteracy is shown, with the same purpose of deprecating Thunberg. The texts we analysed regularly point to the fact that Greta evades classes at school (*it is too difficult for Greta, skipping school classes, and her fans; furious slacker; Swedish schoolgirl-slacker Greta Thunberg; famous for protests and claims to skip Friday school for saving climate and planet environment, etc.*), and demonstrates the consequences of such behavior. The abnormality of such a description is obscured due to the deliberate contradiction of opposing viewpoints: fake-Greta, with her immature judgments, and "ordinary" representative of society (Greta's teacher Linda Weisman, in the cited example):

Thunberg herself considers school a filthy place. <...> I tried to influence her, but only to hear the answer that she works for global corporations. <...> I do not know when she is planning to enter a university, but I admit that she even does not think about it.

(IA Panorama, 12/23/2019)

Thunberg's utterance contains the opposite evaluation, strongly showing the person's impulsiveness and naivety, which is obviously against the teacher's speech, and deliberately expressed in a neutral tone.

Another sign of illiteracy is the deliberate mocking of Greta's ideas through the demonstration of their absurdness. Thus, the comparison of descriptions of transport, which is used (or rejected) by the person, helps to debase the significance of this person in the political environment, clearly stating the price of the expressed protest:

Greta, *saving ecology*, did not fly from Stockholm to New York by plane, but *risking her life* she made the Transatlantic sail by a 4-million-euro yacht. Poor girl did not know that the yacht is made of carbon – the refined product.

(Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 10/08/2019)

The sarcastic evaluation of the situation is formed both directly by the use of evaluative vocabulary, and indirectly by introducing utterances in a clearly revealing context, conveying the factual semantics.

4.3. Actions

The subfield of actions within the texts is formed with the expressive means of temporality, locativeness and actionality, as well as with the means of transmitting the accent modality. We shall consider their potential in expressing the sarcastic evaluation. Our observations show that sarcastic evaluation in media text is transmitted both through naming the human actions and through the demonstration of personal speech acts, controversially showing the absurdness of the person and the suggested way to solve the ecological problem. To reveal the general illiteracy of the person and the incompetence of her judgments, as well as the exuberant and sometimes fanatic emotionality, there is a complex of means of the actant category aimed at discrediting Greta Thunberg's activities. This is partially supported by the evaluation of the person travelling and the demonstration of her difficulties, where the verbs of movement and mental activity form the absurdness of the very fact of such a dilemma:

Greta is *in Lisbon now* and she has to be *in Madrid on Friday somehow*, which is *not far – but* it is not washed by water, so all the boats are cancelled; Greta seeks for other ways to *arrive and it did not take much time* – the citizens of *a small town in the Castile part of Spain* helped her – they offered her the most ecological way of transportation – a donkey!

(Snob, 12/05/2019)

Sarcasm is supported with the means of the category of temporality (*now – on Friday*) and locativeness (*in Lisbon – on Madrid, a small town in the Castile part of Spain*) as well as conjunctions, producing the logical interaction between the judgments.

The image of “illiterate attention seeker” is supported with the inclusion of verbs of mental activity in the hypothetical context at the expense of a clear definition of unreal modality (verbs in conditional forms):

If the girl Thunberg *studied* in a good Russian school, she *would not* talk such nonsense. Greta *would know* that man-made emission of carbon dioxide *is about 7-16 gigatons a year*, and the Pacific ocean *discharges 80 gigatons*; that every year in autumn *40-60 gigatons of carbon dioxide returns* due to the death and decay of plants in the middle climate zone, and later this gas is again consumed by plants (spring-autumn). So, fighting against air emission, we must struggle with oceans and forests, not with people.

(Tsargrad, 09/24/2019)

The complete modal frame reflects the author's regret about the incompetence of the person, contradicting the objective information. In the formation of a sarcastic evaluation, the demonstration of Greta's impulsiveness and emotionality is brought to the point of absurdity. The typical means are the extrapolation of exalted behavior of the religious fanatics on Thunberg's actions. Thus, the activist is described as a hyper-emotional, fanatic person who *loves protesting*.

Striking. Furiously revealing and hysterically teaching, but at the same time she has no knowledge. Only vivid beliefs.

(Komsomolskaya Pravda, 09/26/2019)

The reference to crusades against heretics highlights the abnormality of such behavior, which obtains a different meaning in the contemporary reality:

The situation with Greta leads to the idea that the West has returned to the gloomy Dark Ages. We remember how in the 11-13th centuries some dozens of exalted and not quite psychologically safe adults and children claimed to set the Holy Sepulchre free from heretics.

(Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 10/08/2019)

Such a comparison to historic epochs is aimed at discrediting the protest movement as a part of it, not just at discrediting the person.

An important component of the author's mockery is the demonstration of the speech activity of a person, which is often in the form of a modelled dialogue: Greta Thunberg's utterances are perceived as comical due to reaccentuation in other contexts. Thus, her words "You stole my dreams and my childhood" addressed for the first time to politicians at the UN opening ceremony receives its new, sarcastic reconsideration when the journalist, replacing the object of Thunberg's criticism from politicians to the chemical substance, demonstrates the absurdity of the utterance:

- What harm did carbon dioxide do to you?
- It stole my childhood.

(IA Panorama, 09/25/2019)

The controversy of fake emotional speech attributed to Thunberg, filled with aggressive and offensive vocabulary, is perceived within the modeled dialogue to the expressly official announcement of the opposite side

"I hope all the initiators and performers of this crime will be put in jail with greenhouse gases. Burn in greenhouse hell, bastards! ... You are all real idiots, greenhouse gases destroy us too"... According to the resource officials, the night problems carried the technical character. There is no trace of hacking attacks.

(IA Panorama, 11/21/2019)

So the media's desire to demonstrate the abnormality of such actions is obvious.

Conclusion

In the media discourse, a person always becomes an object of intensive attention. Media texts have a vector character: they show a person acting in specific conditions, give their psychological characteristics, and demonstrate social significance or its absence. Among the most important models of human representation in the mass media, "the demonstration of a positive experience of a person" and "the discrediting of a person" are distinguished. The material analysis demonstrates the potential humour has in a person's representation in mass media.

The model of "a person's discrediting presentation" is usually characterized by a hyperbolized negative evaluation that is related to the relevance and topicality of the agenda and other persons involved. This explains special interest of media in the facts of reality (biography

and features of appearance). An important place is occupied by the evaluation of a person and their activities, which serves to communicate his/her negative image.

By studying the example of publications about Greta Thunberg, the model of “a person’s discrediting presentation” in mass media, we reveal the active use of language means, expressing sarcastic evaluation to demonstrate the author’s opposing viewpoint to the semantic position of the “Other”. By thinking of a person in terms of the variety of all their disadvantages, the media seem to be arguing with the society and single groups, highlighting the inability and absurdity of ideas that the person, like a “megaphone”, transmits in the media. The sarcastic evaluation in this case becomes an instrument discrediting not just the person, but the whole approach to solving topical social problems. It seems obvious that a particular person becomes only a projection of the media’s evaluation of the current events in which the person is involved.

The linguistic instruments of forming sarcastic evaluation is the whole complex of language means aimed at the demonstration of abnormality through the selection of nominations, descriptions, and actions. The most important of them are such means as absurdity, hyperbole, alogism, simplification, etc.

Acknowledgment

The study was carried out with the financial support of the RSF: grant 19-18-00530 *Humour as a communicative resource in the digital news environment*.

References

- Arampatzis, C. (2012) ‘Dialects at the service of humour within the American sitcom: A challenge for the dubbing translator’, in Chovanec, J. & Ermida, I. (eds.), *Language and Humour in the Media*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 67-82.
- Alba-Juez, L. (2014). ‘Irony as Inferred Contradiction’. *Russian Journal Of Linguistic* 4, pp. 140-153.
- Alba-Juez, L. & Attardo, S. (2014). ‘The evaluative palette of verbal irony’, in Alba-Juez, L. & Thompson, G. (eds.), *Evaluation in Context*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Apresyan, J. D. (1995). ‘Obraz cheloveka po dannym yazyka: Popytka sistemnogo opisaniya [Image of a person according to the language: An attempt to describe the system]’. *Linguistics Issues* 1, pp. 37-67.
- Aristotle (1924). *De Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*. [Translated by Forster, E.]. Retrieved January 10, 2021 from <https://archive.org/details/worksof aristotle11 arisuoft/page/n263/mode/2up>
- Attardo, S. (2017). ‘Humor and Pragmatics’, in Attardo, S. (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Humor*, New York: Routledge, pp. 174-188.
- Belinskiy, V. G. (1956). *Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy. Tom desyatiy [Full composition of writings. Volume Ten]*. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii nauk SSSR.
- Borev, Yu. B. (1970). *Komicheskoye, ili O tom, kak smekh kaznit nesovershenstvo mira. ochishchayet i obnovlyayet cheloveka i utverzhdayet radost bytiya [The comic, or About how laughter punishes the imperfection of the world, cleanses and renews person and affirms the joy of being]*. Moscow: Iskusstvo.
- Bykova, E. V. (2020). ‘Greta Tunberg kak mediatizirovannyj fenomen’ [Greta Thunberg as a precedent media phenomenon]. *Media Linguistics. Materials of the IV international scientific conference*, pp. 27-31.
- Chattoo, C. & Green-Barber, L. (2018). ‘An investigative journalist and a stand-up comic walk into a bar: The role of comedy in public engagement with environmental journalism’. *Journalism*. Retrieved January 10, 2021 from <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884918763526>.

- Chovanec, J. (2012). 'Conversational humour and joint fantasizing in the online journalism', in Chovanec, J. & Ermida, I. (eds.), *Language and Humour in the Media*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 139-162.
- Colston, H. (2017). 'Irony and Sarcasm', in Attardo, S. (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Humor*, New York: Routledge, pp. 234-249.
- Duskaeva, L. (2018). 'The Dynamic and Static Speech Organization of Texts in Business Media'. *Studies About Languages* 32, pp. 65-76.
- Duskaeva, L. R. (2019). 'Vectors of praxeological analysis in media linguistics'. *Media Linguistics* 6 (1), pp. 4-18.
- Duskaeva, L. R. & Konyaeva, Yu. M. (2017). 'Types of information portraits in a journalistic discourse', *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities* 4, pp. 131-143.
- Dynel, M. (2012). 'Humour on the House: Interactional construction of metaphor in film discourse', in Chovanec, J. & Ermida, I. (eds.), *Language and Humour in the Media*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 83-106.
- Dyrin, A. I. (2012). *Ironiya i sarkazm kak recheznykovyye sredstva otrazheniya moralno-etcheskikh tsennostey britanskogo sotsiuma: na materiale proizvedeniy sovremennoy khudozhestvennoy britanskoy literatury [Irony and sarcasm as speech-language means of reflecting the moral and ethical values of British society: on the material of works of contemporary British art]*. PhD thesis, Moscow.
- Filatova, E. (2012). 'Irony and Sarcasm: Corpus Generation and Analysis Using Crowdsourcing'. in *Proceedings of the Eight International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation LREC*, pp. 392-398.
- Giora, R. & Attardo, S. (2014). 'Irony', in Attardo, S. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Humor Studies*, Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, pp. 397-401.
- Goldstein, J. (1993). 'Humor and comedy in mass media'. *Zeitschrift für Medienpsychologie* 5(4), pp. 246-256.
- Haiman, J. (1998). *Talk Is Cheap: Sarcasm, Alienation, and the Evolution of Language*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- IA Panorama, 09/25/2019. Retrieved January 05, 2021 from <https://panorama.pub/23745-intervju-s-gretoy-tunberg.html>
- IA Panorama, 11/21/2019. Retrieved January 05, 2021 from <https://panorama.pub/26670-goret-v-parnikovom-adu.html>
- IA Panorama, 12/23/2019. Retrieved January 05, 2021 from <https://panorama.pub/28562-greta-tunberg-dvoechnica.html>
- Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 09/26/2019. Retrieved December 27, 2020 from <https://www.spb.kp.ru/daily/27034/4098287/>
- Komsomolskaya Pravda* 10/07/2019. Retrieved December 27, 2020 from <https://www.spb.kp.ru/daily/27038.5/4103030/>
- Kreuz, R. & Caucci, G. (2007). 'Lexical influences on the perception of sarcasm'. *Proceedings of the Workshop on Computational Approaches to Figurative Language (FigLanguages '07)*, pp. 1-4.
- Kreuz, R. & Roberts, R. (1995). 'Two cues for verbal irony: Hyperbole and the ironic tone of voice'. *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity* 10, pp. 21-31.
- Lomonosov, M. V. (1952). *Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy. Tom sedmoy. Trudy po filologii (1739 – 1758) [Full composition of writings. Volume Seven. Proceedings in Philology (1739 – 1758)]*. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii nauk SSSR. (In Russian)
- Mann, Yu. V. (1971). 'Sarcasm', in Surkov, A. (ed.), *Kratkaya literaturnaya entsiklopediya [Brief Encyclopedia of Literature]*. Moscow: Sovetskaya entsiklopediya, pp. 659-660. (In Russian)

- McArthur, T. (1992). 'Sarcasm', in McArthur, T. (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to the English Language*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Moskovsky Komsomolets*, 09/25/2019. Retrieved December 27, 2020 from <https://www.mk.ru/politics/2019/09/25/da-pridut-antikhristy-shvedskuyu-shkolnicu-gretu-tunberg-sravnil-i-s-buzovoy.html>
- Mishlanov, V. A. & Netsvetaeva, N. S. (2009). Kommunikativnye strategii i taktiki v sovremennom politicheskom diskurse (na materiale politicheskoy reklamy predvybornykh kampaniy 2003. 2007. 2008 gg.) [Communicative strategies and tactics in modern political discourse (basing on the political advertisements of the election campaigns of 2003, 2007, 2008)'. *Perm University Bulletin*. 6, pp. 5-13.
- Mukhina, Yu. N. (2006). *Sredstva reprezentatsii ironii v khudozhestvennom tekste [Means of Representing Irony in a Literary Text]*. PhD thesis, Saratov.
- Musloff, A. (2017) 'Metaphor, irony and sarcasm in public discourse'. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 109, pp. 95-104.
- Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 10/08/2019. Retrieved January 02, 2021 from http://www.ng.ru/vision/2019-10-08/7_7696_clairvoyant.html
- Okada, M. (2012). 'Wordplay as a selling strategy in advertisement and sales promotion', in Chovanec, J. & Ermida, I. (eds.), *Language and Humour in the Media*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 163-184.
- Peifer, J. & Myrick, J. (2019). 'Risky satire: Examining how a traditional news outlet's use of satire can affect audience perceptions and future engagement with the news source'. *Journalism*. Retrieved January 10, 2021 from <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884919833259>.
- Pishwa, H. (2009). *Language and Social Cognition: Expression of the Social Mind*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Raskin, V. (1985). *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor*. Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company.
- Raskin, V. (2012). 'The hidden media humour and hidden theory', in Chovanec, J. & Ermida, I. (eds.), *Language and Humour in the Media*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 45-66.
- Republic.ru*, 09/25/2019. Retrieved December 27, 2020 from <https://republic.ru/posts/94791>
- Semedov, S. A. & Sukhareva, V. A. (2020). 'Fenomen Greta Tunberg ili tekhnologii mediatizatsii protesta' [The Greta Thunberg's Phenomenon and Technology of Mediatization of Ecological Protests]. *Concept: Philosophy, Religion, Culture* 13 (1), pp. 121-138.
- Shilikhina, K. M. (2008). 'Intertekst kak sredstvo sozdaniya ironii [Intertext as a means of creating irony]' *Bulletin of Voronezh State University. Series: Linguistics and Intercultural Communication* 3, pp. 152-157.
- Sidelnikova, E. A. (2016). 'Strategii i taktiki effektivnoy kommunikatsii v professionalnoy sfere [Strategies and tactics of effective communication in the professional field]'. *Humanitarian and legal studies. North Caucasus Federal University* 4, pp. 257-261.
- Skorobach, N. Yu. 'Ironicheskii i sarkasticheskiy podtekst kak sredstvo formirovaniya modalnosti somneniya v angloyazychnom publitsisticheskom diskurse [Ironic and sarcastic subtext as a means of forming doubt modality in an English language public discourse]'. *Volga pedagogical bulletin* 2, pp. 81-91.
- Snob*, 12/05/2019. Retrieved December 22, 2020 from <https://snob.ru/profile/32209/blog/162405>
- Trufanova, I. V. (2001). 'O razgranichenii ponjatij: rechevoj akt, rechevoj zhanr, rechevaja strategija, rechevaja taktika [On the distinction of the concepts: speech act, speech genre, speech strategy, speech tactics]'. *Philological studies* 3, pp. 56-65.

- Tsargrad*, 09/24/2019. Retrieved January 02, 2021 from https://tsargrad.tv/experts/greta-tunberg-uchi-geografiju_218400.
- Tsargrad*, 09/30/2019. Retrieved January 02, 2021 from https://tsargrad.tv/articles/raspechatki-peregovorov-trampa-bezumnaja-greta-kloundzhonson-kto-prevrashhaet-politiku-zapada-v-balagan_219308
- Utsumi, A. (2000). 'Verbal irony as implicit display of ironic environment: Distinguishing ironic utterances from nonirony'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 32, pp. 1777-1806.
- Vavilova, T. V. (2010). 'O ponyatii sarkazma [About the concept of sarcasm]'. *Bulletin of Moscow State Linguistic University* 596 (17), pp. 147-155.
- Vasileva, V. V. & Ivanova. L. Yu. (2020). Shutlivaya tonal'nost' kak instrument organizacii vzaimodejstviya v novostnom televizionnom kommunikate [Facetious tone as a technique for organization of interaction in news television communicate] *Media Linguistics* 7 (2), pp. 212-224.
- Vzglyad*, 01/30/2020. Retrieved December 22, 2020 from <https://vz.ru/opinions/2019/1/30/961795.htm>