

**GLOBAL DIGITALIZATION AND LINGUISTIC AESTHETICS: TEXTOLOGY
AND LINGUISTIC IDENTITY**

***DIGITALIZAÇÃO GLOBAL E ESTÉTICA LINGUÍSTICA: TEXTOLOGIA E
IDENTIDADE LINGUÍSTICA***

***DIGITALIZACIÓN GLOBAL Y ESTÉTICA LINGÜÍSTICA: TEXTOLOGÍA E
IDENTIDAD LINGÜÍSTICA***

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ABSTRACT: The digital civilization dictates new formats of aesthetic parameters of narrative and communication. In a publicistic way, the article discusses the problem of correlations between digitalization and linguistic aesthetics. Emphasis is placed on the negative consequences of current global trends in the field of artificial intelligence. The paper offers one of the ways to solve the problem in question considering the philological and aesthetic impact on the language thinking of the individual in order to form a harmoniously developed linguistic personality. In this case, the linguo-aesthetic parameters of texts are inexhaustible material for innovative research. Linguistic aesthetics is an integral part of national culture, in particular, linguistic culture. In the collective consciousness of speakers of the national language, the aesthetic aspect of the text generates a linguo-aesthetic image of the world peculiar to each linguistic community. The article considers some aspects of aesthetic communication and the literary image of the world with regard to the discursive factors of artistic texts. The working hypothesis is that the linguo-aesthetics of the French language have a high degree of linguocultural activity in the modern French national discourse and, accordingly, in the linguistic image of the world. The prospects of the research on the linguo-aesthetics of creativity and conceptual image of the world are outlined.

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KEYWORDS: Linguo-aesthetics. Artificial intelligence. Philological linguistic personality. Linguistic thinking. Artistic discourse.

RESUMO: O artigo oferece uma das formas de solucionar o problema em questão considerando o impacto filológico e estético no pensamento linguístico do indivíduo para formar uma personalidade linguística harmoniosamente desenvolvida. Nesse caso, os parâmetros linguístico-estéticos dos textos são material inesgotável para pesquisas inovadoras. A estética linguística é parte integrante da cultura nacional, em particular, da cultura linguística. Na consciência coletiva dos falantes da língua nacional, o aspecto estético do texto gera uma imagem linguístico-estética do mundo peculiar a cada comunidade linguística. O artigo considera alguns aspectos da comunicação estética e da imagem literária do mundo no que diz respeito aos fatores discursivos dos textos artísticos. A hipótese de trabalho é que a linguo-estética da língua francesa tem um alto grau de atividade linguocultural no discurso nacional francês moderno e, conseqüentemente, na imagem linguística do mundo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Linguo-estética. Inteligência artificial. Personalidade linguística filológica. Pensamento linguístico. Discurso artístico.

RESUMEN: El trabajo ofrece una de las vías para resolver el problema en cuestión considerando el impacto filológico y estético en el pensamiento lingüístico del individuo para formar una personalidad lingüística armónicamente desarrollada. En este caso, los parámetros lingüoestéticos de los textos son material inagotable para la investigación innovadora. La estética lingüística es una parte integral de la cultura nacional, en particular, la cultura lingüística. En la conciencia colectiva de los hablantes de la lengua nacional, el aspecto estético del texto genera una imagen lingüoestética del mundo propia de cada comunidad lingüística. El artículo considera algunos aspectos de la comunicación estética y la imagen literaria del mundo en relación con los factores discursivos de los textos artísticos. La hipótesis de trabajo es que la estética linguo de la lengua francesa tiene un alto grado de actividad linguocultural en el discurso nacional francés moderno y, en consecuencia, en la imagen lingüística del mundo.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Linguo-estética. Inteligencia artificial. Personalidad lingüística filológica. Pensamiento lingüístico. Discurso artístico.

Introduction

The age of global digitalization has swept up all forms of creativity in every sphere of human activity, particularly philological. This phenomenon produces (and will continue to for a long time to come) both positive and negative consequences for individual and collective worldviews and axiological characteristics of linguistic thinking, discourse aesthetics, and communicative behavior models of native speakers of the language.

While the positive components of the digital revolution (smart homes, optimization of document flow procedures, etc.) still inspire some optimism, the negative outcome of the above changes raises great apprehension, especially in the area of the anti-evolution of the human in man. Let us now discuss the element that concerns the pessimistic projections for the digitized change in the anthropological landscape of the 21st century.

Here we should point to the frustration processes in consciousness that concern the theft of figurative thinking from an early age by means of the pictorial-aggressive visuality of computer games. This process also continues throughout the adult age. Meanwhile, a major part of humanity is aging and it seems that people will be ending their life journey in the embrace of virtual reality, equipped with a luxurious color-music-noise set of beautiful pictures prepared in advance. These images emerge in the mind of the subject not by virtue of the intellectual and imaginative effort of their brain but being installed in the consciousness in a ready-made form, more than that – in an Americanized form.

It is also worth noting the quality of speech of computer game characters. Not only is the American version of the English language predominant there, but in the Russified versions (which are usually made hastily) the discourse of the characters is practically impregnated with the ideology of vulgarity and overt Americentrism, but also the language of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy is very difficult to recognize because of loan translations: “*Liubopytstvo pogubilo koshku*” (**Curiosity killed the cat**) is used instead of the common phrase “*Liubopytnoi Varvare na bazare nos otorvali*” (“The nosy Varvara had her nose ripped off at the market”), “*chtoby sdelat etu istoriiu bolee korotkoi*” (**to cut the long story short**) is put instead of the simple “*koroche govoria*” (“shortly speaking”). These examples are taken from faulty translations of texts from computer games, but such “pearls” can be found in abundance not only in the everyday speech of Russians but in the “highly artistic” discourse of media leaders as well.

Linguistic aesthetics has repeatedly been subjected to research and comprehensive discussion in the humanities and philological circles of the global scientific community (GERMAN 2009; GRISHAEVA 2007; OGNEVA 2014; ORLOVA 2003; VISHNIAKOVA 2003; ZAIKA 2000). Nevertheless, this subject is far from a definitive and exhaustive explanation of its essential characteristics. The word as the main nominative unit of language has aesthetic potential and is closely related to the concept of “writer’s language”, or “idiostyle”, which is embodied in artistic texts with the help of various means of aesthetic impact. The lexical level of language has the greatest aesthetic resources (KARASIK, 2002; KOMOVA; GARAGULIA, 2013).

In this sense, the novel “In Search of Lost Time” by the French writer Marcel Proust is a very productive and relevant material for consideration and analysis of linguistic and aesthetic categories in the context of the evolution of modern French.

Theoretical provisions of the study

Let us now return to the phenomenon of digitalization, which is widely covered by all mass media, particularly when it comes to artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence, as we are told (which is difficult to argue with, though) is designed to help perform calculations that load the brain excessively. However, what they forget to say is that the analog of intellectual functions aims to gradually deprive *homo sapiens* from this very ability of intelligent thinking by eliminating humanity’s last refuge – the intellect.

Considering ourselves members of the philological fraternity, we would like to propose a solution to the described challenge of modernity with linguistic means, or rather, the aesthetic component of the national language, for we are convinced that it is the beauty of language that can save the world or at least prevent the world from slipping into the banality of purely functional communication.

Methods

Linguistic aesthetics must be studied not only in the framework of nomination but also as a phenomenon of communication. In this regard, all aspects of cultural aesthetics are considered in terms of their saturation with communicative information (KHARCHENKO, 2010; OGNEVA *et al.*, 2015).

The key methodological positions in the study of nominations of aesthetic objects are categorical features distinguished at the level of functioning of language units in the discourse-communicative space. The esthetonym (nominative of an aesthetic object), becoming part of specialized discourse, is often deprived of its connection with a specific person or object, thereby losing its direct nominative function, ceasing to be an expression of the ultimate singularity, beginning to grow more general, which results in the transformation of meaning. In other words, the esthetonym partially loses its connection with concrete singular concepts and acquires additional connotations.

Despite the relative universality of aesthetic phenomena, their nominatives, to a greater extent than any other part of the language’s vocabulary, are closely related to the history,

traditions, and literature of the people who speak the language. This property is clearly manifested in the phraseological units, the component of which is esthetonyms.

The most essential element of the study is the analysis of the use of nominatives of aesthetic objects in various types of modern discourse. Along these lines, linguo-aesthetic discourse is treated as an integral part of the nationwide conceptual space of the national language and communication (PRUVOST; SEDYKH; BUZINOVA, 2018).

As can be seen from the review of scientific literature, an important place in the terminological and discursive inquiries is occupied by the problem traditionally relevant to the world philology – the relationship between language and culture. Manifestations of aesthetic worldview are ethnospecific by definition, which is caused by the various factors of the extra- and intralinguistic order. Each particular semantic-psychological and emotional-aesthetic manifestation of reality is shaped by the peculiarities of personal linguistic consciousness as a general image of the carrier and transmitter of cultural, language, communicative, and behavioral reactions (BOGOSLOVSKAIA, 2002).

Results and discussion

Linguistic aesthetics has repeatedly been subject to research and comprehensive discussion in the humanities and philological circles of the global scientific community (BORDEAU, 2020; POPOVA, 2005; SEDYKH, 1998). Nevertheless, this subject is far from a definitive and exhaustive explanation of its essential characteristics.

In this paper, we do not purport to offer a final and “exhaustive explanation of the essential characteristics” of linguo-aesthetics, we merely intend to summarize our view of one of the important aspects of linguo-aesthetics – philological thinking (FILLIPOVA, 2010). Or, more precisely, to articulate our position on the tasks of raising the philological linguistic personality, of which Dmitry Sergeevich Likhachev wrote in his time, and whose structure is based not only on a caring attitude to the native language but also on a high aesthetic sense of its use in speech and the active struggle for its improvement at all stages of its development (LIKHACHEV, 1996).

The question is: How can a mother tongue defeat digitalization? The point is that we are speaking not of a victory over evil but only about the possibility to oppose it with the beauty of linguistic thoughts, in other words, to strike the process of degradation of the anthropological landscape of humanity with the linguistic aesthetics of thought.

This refers to the creative potential of linguistic thinking, which is expressed in the creation of the artistic type of discourse. This discourse includes not only the highly artistic language creativity of a writer but also the creativity of regular people who, with a love for the beauty of the language and speech, lays their brick in the linguistic and aesthetic edifice of the future temple of humanity.

Along these lines, a few words about an interesting experience in France. Here we would like to mention Jeanne Bordeau, the founder and director of the Paris Quality of Expression Institute (*Institut de la qualité de l'expression*). Philologist Jeanne Bordeau is a passionate advocate of the quality of the French language and writing. In her book “The New Power of Language” (*Le nouveau pouvoir du langage*), Bordeau urges the French to communicate using “responsible writing”, which, despite the strictness of the formal semantic requirements, has its own aesthetic appeal (BORDEAU, 2020).

A promising aspect of this concept is the search for a compromise between digitalization and linguistics based on the connection between digital technologies and linguistic competences. To this end, the French researcher promotes her linguistic-aesthetic project on branded enterprises and firms. Jeanne Bordeau proceeds from the idea that the secret desires of the client lie in the realm of the authenticity of the commodity being purchased. In the era of the creation of new meanings, people are tired of “*bullshit marketing*” and “*prêt à penser*” (pattern thinking). The scholar believes that firms must learn to use writing that is “effective,” “attractive,” and “responsible” when communicating with customers (*efficace, séduisant et responsable*). The modern customer not only wants more information, they want a frank dialogue with the provider of goods and services. According to Bordeau, the client should have the impression that they themselves take part in the creation of this or that product. In this sense, the term “responsible writing” refers to the process of influencing a client with emotionally charged authentic text, equipped with individualized communication markers. At the initiative of Jeanne Bordeau, French enterprises are creating new positions and specialties: *linguistic therapist, linguistic aesthetician, linguistic editor, linguistic coach, linguistic consultant*, and more.

In our opinion, one of the key “linguistic consultants” and “linguistic therapists” of French culture is the writer Marcel Proust. Proust’s model of linguistic personality is closely intertwined with the linguistic aesthetics of the novel “In Search of Lost Time”. Marcel Proust’s novel is incredibly densely filled with characters (more than 100 main and secondary characters,

plus about 200 episodic characters) who speak, write, and discuss in different types of discourse, from argotic speech to refined monologues of the French gentry and high society.

The writer knew his native language intimately and was well-acquainted with the various strata of French society, so he meticulously constructed each character in exact accordance with his discourse affiliation. At the same time, despite the heterogeneity of the discourse palette, the key episodes of the novel are served by examples of the linguistic aesthetics of French verbal creativity.

At the same time, some researchers (PIERRON, 2005) accuse Marcel Proust of excessive “secularism” and “oralism” (excessive preoccupation with oral forms of linguistic material). According to them, the secular conversations (and not only secular but also women’s discourse, the discourse of common people and children) reproduced in the novel “In Search of Lost Time” are characterized by conversational forms lacking the high intellectuality of exemplary French, such as in the Middle Ages, when Latin remained the language of knowledge.

Purists accuse the language of Proust's novels of lacking the famous French clarity because, in their opinion, starting at a young age, the writer Proust drew inspiration not from classical works, not even from the Symbolists, but chose a style that was “*affectif et individuel*. *Le texte plaide pour une langue sensible, non pour la langue de raison des académistes, dans des termes qui ne doivent rien à la ‘clarté’ (à la précision sémantique) et beaucoup aux conceptions synesthésiques*” (PROUST, 1988, p. 28) (“**affective and individual**. The texts are filled with sensitive language, not the language of academic reason, using terms that have nothing to do with ‘clarity’ or semantic precision, but rather relate to synesthetic concepts of new age language”).

According to Pierron, “Proustian ‘clarity’ is not based on literalism and the certainty of monosemic denotation. It is above all a question of the ‘readability’ of the text, when attention is focused on the problem of reception, which is rather closer to politics or *aesthetics* (“*La ‘clarté’ [pour Proust] [...] n’est pas fondée [...] sur la littéralité, sur la croyance en une dénotation monosémique [...]* » (PROUST, 1988, p. 32); *il s’agit plutôt d’une question de ‘lisibilité’, où l’attention est portée sur la réception, sur un problème qui serait partant plus politique et social qu’esthétique*”). The critic goes on to develop the idea of semantic constructions in Proust’s texts, which are perceived not as a given but as an interpretive construct (PROUST, 1988, p. 35).

In this way, the critics of Proust's heritage involuntarily emphasize the peculiarities of the author's aesthetics, the linguo-aesthetics of creativity, which are characterized by a pluralistic interpretive potential, which is also characteristic of the general aesthetics of the French language: "*S'il en est ainsi la question redevient esthétique: le problème est déjà – avant que Proust ait pu élaborer une esthétique personnelle – le subjectivisme de l'interprétation du monde, dont la conséquence inévitable est l'instabilité du sens, obtenu chaque fois au terme d'une élaboration plurielle*" ("If this is so, the question becomes aesthetic again: the problem is already – before Proust was able to elaborate a personal aesthetic – the subjectivism of the interpretation of the world, whose inevitable consequence is the instability of the meaning, receptively constructed by the reader each time they comes into contact with the author's text").

Proust always emphasized, even at the early stage of his work, when he was engaged in translations from English (the writings of Ruskin, an English art historian and literary aestheticist), the role of the linguistic personality of the writer, stressing the specific relationship with the national language, saying that it "*portent toujours et de très fort près sur la relation de l'écrivain avec le langage*" ("always bears very closely on the writer's relationship with language") (PROUST, 1988, p. 42-43). Proust takes an almost idolatrous stance toward the word as a key element of writing style: "*un élément fondamental de la pensée linguistique et esthétique de Proust: soit qu'il n'existe pas un sens a priori des mots, qui serait observable en dehors de leur mise en discours, et qu'en littérature ce sens est réalisable uniquement dans le style*" (a fundamental element of Proust's linguistic and aesthetic thought is that there is no a priori meaning of words, which would be observable outside their discourse, and that in literature this meaning is realizable only in the style).

Outlining the bounds of creative linguistic aesthetics, Proust goes much further, arguing that "*Les seules personnes qui défendent la langue française (comme l'Armée pendant l'affaire Dreyfus), ce sont celles qui l'attaquent*" (The only people who defend the French language (like the Army during the Dreyfus affair), are those who attack it). In this way, he speaks of the excessive academicism of the French language, which will die if it uses only the idealized, emasculated by wretched traditionalism forms of its existence. In fact, Proust's novelistic texts (some researchers consider them "poetic") reflect, and therefore reconstruct, the transitive space of linguo-aesthetics of the late 19th century. It can be said that this concerns the formation of a narrative chronotope of the period of transition from the language of ideology to the language

of linguists, in other words, from the ideological “lexicography” to the materiality of linguistic facts, on which the literary work is based.

The next linguistic and aesthetic aspect of “In Search of Lost Time” is what can be termed “meta-linguistic commentary” on behalf of the Narrator. The meta-linguistic commentary of the writer’s *alter ego* allows identifying transversal (intersecting; multidisciplinary) linguistic categories (neologisms, borrowings, argotisms, jargonisms), which are massively represented in the novel, both in the language of the characters and in the matrix narrative (*narration matricielle*). This refers to the phenomenon of the speech *mise en scène* described by Sylvie Pierron: “*Le commentaire, par nature explicite, forme le fil rouge du thème de la langue dans le roman*” (“The commentary, by its very nature explicit, forms the common thread of the theme of language in the novel”) (PIERRON, 2005, p. 72). The narrator often begins with normative remarks (correct pronunciation, choice of vocabulary, style notes, etc.) to end with more general reflections on linguistic facts. One might say that the linguistic (linguo-aesthetic) line constitutes a kind of dramaturgy of the literary work. Relying on linguistic remarks, the reader not only gets involved in the “creation” of new semantic texts but also acquires some meta-linguistic skills for evaluating the textual canvas.

The linguistic and aesthetic problems of the novel “In Search of Lost Time” revolve around the category “the spirit of the French language,” which unfolds not only as a “spectacle of languages” of the characters but also as an extrapolation of the content of a number of linguistic terms used by the Narrator (*nom, langue, génie de la langue française*).

In this sense, the narrator participates in the creation of the myth of the universality of French: “*Le mythe de l’universalité de la langue française est en effet une conséquence de la politique impériale menée aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, et les civilisations latine et française ont en commun de réunir sous le même terme de ‘langue’, devenu emblématique, les domaines politique, linguistique et littéraire. Le ‘génie de la langue française’ ne désigne pas au fond les qualités d’une syntaxe, d’un lexique, d’une prononciation, mais affirme l’indivisibilité d’une nation, d’un territoire, d’une langue qu’il convient de défendre et d’illustrer, militairement et littérairement*” (“The myth of the universality of the French language is indeed a consequence of the imperial policy conducted in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the Latin and French civilizations have a lot in common, uniting under the term of ‘language’, which has become emblematic, the political, linguistic, and literary fields. The ‘genius of the French language’ refers not just to the qualities of syntax, lexicon, or pronunciation, but affirms the indivisibility of a nation, of a territory, of a language that must be defended and illustrated by

all means, from military to literary”) (PIERRON, 2005, p. 165). Indeed, the idea of the “genius” of French began to be developed at all levels from the Middle Ages onward, and was finally consolidated in the Classical era as a counterbalance to regional dialects, Latin, and other foreign languages (SEDYKH *et al.*, 2020).

The linguistic personalities appearing in the novel exist only because of the linguistic categories of which they are bearers. In this sense, they continue to develop and reinforce the myth of the national language, to the categories of which belong the *purity* and *clarity* of the French language. In this vein, we can argue that Proust’s meanings exist in the form of language and directly correlate with the writer’s aesthetic taste, which reveals itself through the speech of his characters, in other words – with the literary work whose aesthetic reference points exist in the form of new texts at the level of reader’s perception.

Conclusion

The linguo-aesthetics of speech and communication require a selfless and active position of an individual who feels themselves not a mere cog in the digital civilization but a powerful element in its salvation. Only a creative philological personality can save humanity from the uniformization of thought. With no doubt, there is a real need for professional coaches, consultants, and language therapists. We are convinced, however, that if every person in their real and intellectual “location” plays their seemingly unnoticeable part in purifying their native language or at least monitors the cleanliness of their speech, then at least the people close to them will improve the quality of their communication and worldview, and then we can only hope for the linguistic-aesthetic butterfly effect. Digitalization aside, mankind cannot survive without beauty and the satisfaction of high aesthetic needs.

Summarizing the analysis of the above-discussed French artistic discourse, we can state that the linguistic and aesthetic parameters of the French language are a fundamental component of linguistic personalities in Marcel Proust’s novel “In Search of Lost Time”. In the future, it is proposed to consider the identical material in correlation with the author’s concept of “*beauté*” (beauty), which is one of the key concepts of French culture.

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