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ЯЗЫКОВЫЕ СТРАТЕГИИ ПРЕОДОЛЕНИЯ КОММУНИКАТИВНЫХ БАРЬЕРОВ В СОВРЕМЕННОМ АНГЛОЯЗЫЧНОМ АНИМАЦИОННОМ ДИСКУРСЕ

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Аннотация. Анализируются языковые стратегии преодоления коммуникативных барьеров в современном англоязычном анимационном дискурсе на материале анимационного фильма «Элементарно» (*Elemental*). На примере взаимодействия персонажей, олицетворяющих стихии Огня и Воды, и с опорой на корпуса данных анализируется, как принадлежность к тому или иному типу стихии определяет речевые паттерны, концептуализацию эмоций и дискурсивные выборы, изначально порождающие непонимание и конфликт между героями анимационного фильма. Исследование доказывает, что язык из инструмента дифференциации может трансформироваться в механизм межкультурного диалога, основанного на взаимной эмпатии.

Ключевые слова: анимационный дискурс, английский язык, языковые стратегии, барьер, коммуникация.
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PHILOLOGY

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Original article

Bridging the gap: linguistic strategies in contemporary English-language animation discourse

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Abstract. The article analyzes language strategies for overcoming communication barriers in modern English-language educational discourse based on the material of the animated film "Elementary". Using the example of the interaction of characters embodying the elements of Fire and Water, and relying on data sets, it analyzes how belonging to a particular type of element determines speech patterns, conceptualization of emotions, and discursive choices that initially generate misunderstanding and conflict between the characters of an animated film. The study proves that language can transform from an instrument of differentiation into a mechanism of intercultural dialogue based on mutual empathy.

Key words: animation discourse, English, language strategies, barrier, communication.
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Introduction

The article deals with linguistic strategies for overcoming communication barriers in modern English-language animation discourse. It is aimed at managing miscommunication. Verbal and multimodal strategies in modern English animated films are under analysis.

The relevance of this study is due to the increasing interest of modern linguistics in the analysis of multimodal texts that combine verbal and visual means of conveying meaning. Animation films,

which are complex communication products, attract special attention. The cartoon «Elementary» provides a unique material for analysis. The characters' belonging to different elements determines not only their visual appearance, but also their speech patterns, behavior, and communication strategies.

Of particular interest is the comparison of Fire and Water images. The linguistic representation of these elements allows us to trace how the physical properties of the element are superimposed on the emotional sphere and social interaction. Such a study of linguistic means deepens the understanding of the mechanisms of creating artistic images in animation discourse.

The relevance of the work is also determined by the increasing attention to audiovisual texts in modern linguistics and the lack of elaboration of language strategy issues for overcoming communication barriers between characters in modern animated works of recent years.

The empirical basis of this study is the animated film Elementary, reviewed in the original English version, as well as the script for the film [1]. The material for the analysis was the utterances of representatives of two key elements – Fire and Water. The plot conflict and dynamics of the picture are based precisely on the collision of these opposing worlds, each of which has its own way of perceiving the world, emotional response and communicative behavior. The speech practices of the characters are considered in the work as an important source of information about the formation of conceptual models underlying their images, as well as as a source of linguistic strategies for overcoming communication barriers between the characters of animated discourse.

Discussion

To conduct the research, a specialized corpus of linguistic data has been created. The total volume of the corpus was approximately 400 utterances, which corresponds to about 6,500 word usage.

There were several stages. At the first stage, the text material of the cartoon was prepared in English. After that, the author segmented all the lines of the characters and distributed the speech fragments according to the spontaneous affiliation of the characters. This made it possible to form separate arrays of data reflecting the linguistic behavior of representatives of Water and Fire. This distinction provided an opportunity for comparative analysis and allowed us to consider the linguistic features of the characters.

At the stage of corpus preparation, elements that are not directly related to the speech activity of the characters were excluded from the material. These elements included author's remarks and descriptions of non-verbal actions. This allowed us to obtain clean data for quantitative frequency analysis. The focus was solely on the speech component of the discourse. The prepared case became the basis for further quantitative and qualitative processing of the material. One of the key research methods was corpus analysis, aimed at identifying the frequency of use of lexical units in the speech of characters of various elements. Calculating the frequency allowed us to identify the most significant thematic areas that the characters of Water and Fire most often address.

The concept of a communicative space includes, among other characteristics inherent in it, such an important component as a communication barrier [4]. This barrier can be determined by the status of the interlocutor, age, work experience, position in the team – all this sets the framework of the communicative space.

The analysis of linguistic strategies for overcoming communication barriers between the characters of modern English-language animation discourse is based on the works of T.A. van Dyck, G. Kress [2; 3].

The analysis of the linguistic interaction of the elements of Fire and Water allows us to move from isolated portraits of each element to the dynamics of their relationships. The dialogues between Amber and Wade represent not just a romantic line, but a model of intercultural communication, where various metaphorical models collide, generate misunderstanding and ultimately find ways to approach each other. In this section, the focus shifts from lexical and syntactic features to discursive strategies through which characters overcome «spontaneous» barriers.

In the first phase of interaction, linguistic markers of misunderstanding and prejudice can be detected. The study reveals a fundamental difference in the speech strategies of the elements from the very first minutes of interaction. Fire is prone to aggression and confrontation (appropriating someone

else's vocabulary for insults: «Make like a stream and flow somewhere else»), whereas Water demonstrates adaptability and the absence of reciprocal verbal aggression. This creates an initial power imbalance in the dialogue.

One of the characteristic strategies of the initial phase of interaction is the appropriation of vocabulary to another element for the purpose of verbal aggression. Amber, annoyed by Wade's presence, says, «Make like a stream and flow somewhere else». Formally, she uses the «water» verb flow and the image of a stream, but in fact this statement is a rude imperative to expel the interlocutor. Spontaneous vocabulary here works as a dehumanization tool – the speaker assigns someone else's code to hit them. It is noteworthy that Wade does not do this, there is no similar technique in his speech, which marks the asymmetry of speech behavior. Fire is prone to confrontation, and Water is adaptable. The only time a water character uses a word related to heat is Wade's compliment «You're so hot», which, despite the initial awkwardness, is reinterpreted in a romantic way.

In the second phase, the characters face communication barriers related to differences in emotional regulation. Amber doesn't understand how Wade attracts people.: «How do you do that? Draw people in! You got a whole stadium to connect with you. I–I can't even connect with ONE customer». She perceives his emotionality as a technology, not as a natural state. Wade, in turn, doesn't understand why Amber is exploding: «I don't think a temperature is so bad. Sometimes when I lose MY temper... I think it's just ME trying to tell me something I'm not ready to hear». He tries to rethink her problematic character as an internal signal. But Amber rejects it at first: «That's ridiculous».

Barriers arise not because of a lack of words, but because of different understandings of the nature of feelings. For Fire, anger (losing temper) is a loss of control and destruction; for Water, an emotion is a signal that requires decoding (trying to tell me something I'm not ready to hear). The characters try to apply their internal explanatory models to other people's behavior, but they fail until they change their point of view itself. Different ways of conceptualizing the same emotional sphere generate communication barriers, and these barriers cannot be removed by simply «translating» words, something more fundamental is required here.

The communicative differences between Fire and Water are reinforced not only by the peculiarities of the characters' speech behavior, but also by the very organization of the Element City space. The city in the cartoon is not a neutral environment, but a system initially focused primarily on the needs of Water, Air and Land. For fire characters, urban space is constantly associated with potential danger: water channels, lack of heat – resistant infrastructure, the need to avoid contact with water – all this creates a sense of vulnerability and exclusion. The fire here does not seem to fit into the general scheme, I have to constantly look around and calculate the risks. Particularly revealing in this regard is the Firetown neighborhood, where Amber's family lives. The spatial isolation of the fiery community performs both a protective and isolating function. On the one hand, Firetown is becoming a space for preserving cultural memory, family traditions and the Firish language. This is where fire characters can exist without having to constantly adapt to the dominant urban environment, and it gives them a sense of security. On the other hand, such isolation inevitably increases the distance between the elements and contributes to the emergence of mutual prejudices. The very infrastructure of the city, we note, reflects a hidden social asymmetry.: Water moves freely through channels and pipes, easily penetrating into various spaces, while Fire has to constantly take into account the risk of its own extinction. As a result, the Element City organization turns into a spatial metaphor for intercultural interaction, in which one group turns out to be better integrated into the social system than the other.

The third phase is the beginning of intercultural communication. The beach scene where Amber shows her vulnerability for the first time is pivotal: «I think I'm failing... My Ashfa should have retired YEARS ago but he doesn't think I'm ready». Pay attention to Wade's reaction. He doesn't give advice. He does not try to "fix" it or offer a solution. He just says, «Hey, no. You're doing your best». His reaction is an empathic presence, not a solution to a problem. Amber continues, «I'm a mess», and Wade replies, «Nah, I think you're even more beautiful». A short remark, without unnecessary pathos, works as a confirmation of unconditional acceptance. He doesn't argue with her pain, doesn't try to dissuade her, but he

doesn't pull away either. And in response, Amber for the first time admits the possibility of a different view of her own temperament: «Maybe you're right when you say my temper is me trying to tell me something». It is here that the monologue of each of them, where she is about duty and failure, and he is about feelings, turns into a genuine dialogue for the first time. Both begin to hear each other, and this hearing becomes possible precisely because they stopped insisting on their own

In the fourth phase, acceptance and rapprochement occur. The climax is the touching scene at the Mineral Lake: «Placing her palm in his, they TOUCH, in awe. Water boiling, steam, chemistry». Linguistic reactions are kept to a minimum here, the main communication unfolds on a pre-verbal level through touch, eye contact, and the shared experience of the moment in which the elements first come into contact without devastating consequences. Later, in the scene in front of Amber's house, Wade makes a direct confession, without resorting to a metaphorical recoding of his status: «I love you, Ember Lumen. And I'm pretty sure you love me too». Wade formulates not only his own feeling, but also, with the empathic confidence characteristic of water discourse, verbalizes Amber's feeling, which she herself was not ready to say out loud at that moment. The final condensation scene turns out to be perhaps the most striking example of the linguistic realization of the metaphor of intercultural communication. Amber uses the techniques from "The Crying Game" that he showed her to bring Wade back to life. She masters his language, the emotional code of Water, and this is what triggers the reverse phase transition. She does not save him with the power of fire, but masters someone else's spontaneous tactics.

Earlier in the film, in one of the scenes of a walk together, Amber tried to teach Wade the fiery word "tishok", which, according to her explanation, means a special feeling: when heat rises inside, but not angry, but warm, associated with joy and affection. Wade tries clumsily but diligently to repeat the word. This is his willingness to enter into a foreign language environment, to accept an incomprehensible but meaningful word for another person. what will Amber do later in the finale, mastering the technique of "The Crying Game". Both, in fact, learn each other's language, and it is this mutual learning, and not the rejection of their own identity, that becomes the key to a genuine rapprochement.

Thus, the rapprochement of Fire and Water at the linguistic level is not built as a one-sided learning, where one teaches, the other learns, but as a mutual exchange. Each of the characters introduces an element of someone else's code into his speech, recognizing its value and significance. Both characters begin to borrow from each other's communicative codes, validating their emotional significance.

The difference of the elements is not annulled or obscured. Crucially, this interaction does not erase or dilute their elemental differences.

However, on top of this difference, a common communicative space is built, in which the characters do not require each other to renounce their own nature, but learn to recognize, accept and use the other's language at critical moments. It is this two-way process that transforms the conceptual metaphor "element = man" from a model that captures differences into a model that describes the possibility of cross-cultural dialogue.

It's a mutual mastery of each other's languages: Firish for Wade, the emotional code of crying for Amber. This becomes an essential element of the integrative model that the cartoon builds. The difference of the elements is not annulled or obscured. Fire remains Fire, Water remains Water, with all their characteristic ways of experiencing and expressing emotions. However, on top of this difference, a common communicative space is built, in which the characters do not require each other to renounce their own nature, but learn to recognize, accept and use the other's language at critical moments. It is this two–way process that transforms the conceptual metaphor "element – man" from a model that captures differences and barriers into a model that describes the possibility of an intercultural dialogue based not on blurring borders, but on their mutual intersection. This two-way process reframes the "element = person" metaphor: it shifts from mapping static barriers to enabling intercultural dialogue. One observes a form of dialogue grounded not in assimilation, but in the productive negotiation of boundaries

Conclusion

The interaction between Amber and Wade shows that the linguistic model of Fire and Water in the cartoon serves as a representation of intercultural communication. At the initial stages, the difference between the elements manifests itself through misunderstanding, prejudice, and a mismatch of ways of emotional expression, but as the relationship develops, the characters gradually move from confrontation to mutual recognition and acceptance. The key is not to eliminate the differences between Fire and Water, but to master the elements of someone else's communicative code and the ability to see the individuality of another behind the elemental nature. As a result, language ceases to be an instrument of differentiation and turns into a means of rapprochement, and the metaphor of the elements itself is reinterpreted as a model of dialogue based on mutual openness, empathy and the preservation of one's own identity.

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