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THE DISCOURSE STUDIES OF COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION GENRES DEVELOPMENT IN MODERN LINGUISTICS

ДИСКУРСИВНІ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ РОЗВИТКУ ЖАНРІВ КОМП'ЮТЕРНО-ОПОСЕРЕДКОВАНОЇ КОМУНІКАЦІЇ В СУЧАСНІЙ ЛІНГВІСТИЦІ

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Modern linguistics works identify computer discourse analysis as one of the most vital scientific problems. The paper discusses various approaches to discourse studies and describes the linguistic and extralinguistic features of modern computer discourse. Communication in a computer-mediated discourse is an object of research and the linguistic features of scientific network discourse are described.

The paper describes the results of the concepts of computer-mediated communication studies and linguistic genres development based on the works of modern linguists. The results of the study show that digital technologies assist in the development of new types of communication, and change the old ones.

Discourse is a real speech element and a unit of verbal communication and could be regarded as a text, but the text is not a discourse but an abstract mental unit realized in discourse. Special attention is paid to the scientific and educational discourses, which are significantly influenced by computer communication discourse genre development and expand the scope of academic interaction.

Another aspect of the computer discourse study, described in the paper, is genre classifications research, which is analogical to the genres of traditional communication and includes general and new genres used in electronic media. The functional genre classification considers information, social, directive, presentational, aesthetic, and entertainment genres studied in the process of communicative interaction. The electronic genres' characteristics are dependent on communicative goals, mode of interaction, text forms, composition, and linguistic features.

Special attention was drawn to characteristics of the computer-mediated communication discourse research and further ways of the linguistic study of modern computer discourse were proposed.

Key words: computer discourse, computer-mediated communication, computer-mediated discourse, digital communication, digital discourse, sociolinguistics of computer communication, genres.

Сучасні лінгвістичні наукові праці визначають дискурсивний аналіз комп'ютерної лексики як одну з найактуальніших наукових проблем. У статті розглядаються різні підходи до вивчення дискурсу, описуються лінгвістичні особливості сучасного комп'ютерного дискурсу. Об'єктом дослідження визначається комунікація в комп'ютерно-опосередкованому дискурсі, описуються лінгвістичні особливості наукового мережевого дискурсу.

У статті досліджено різні концепції вивчення комп'ютерної комунікації та розвитку електронних жанрів на основі праць сучасних лінгвістів. Результати дослідження показують, що цифрові технології сприяють розвитку нових видів комунікації та змінюють старі.

Дискурс описується одночасно як мовленнєвий елемент і як одиниця вербальної комунікації, яку можна розглядати як текст, але текст позиціонується не як дискурс, а абстрактна ментальна одиниця, що реалізується

в дискурсі. Особливу увагу приділено науково-освітнім дискурсивній типології, на які суттєво впливає розвиток жанру дискурсу комп'ютерної комунікації та розширенню сфери академічної взаємодії між вченими й науковцями різних країн завдяки розвитку комп'ютерно-опосередкованої комунікації.

Ще одним аспектом вивчення комп'ютерного дискурсу, описаним у статті, є дослідження жанрової класифікації електронного спілкування, аналогічного жанрам традиційної комунікації та включає традиційні й нові жанри, що використовуються різноманітними електронними медіа. Функціональна класифікація жанрів включає серед інших інформаційні, соціальні, директивні, презентаційні, естетичні та розважальні жанри, що застосовуються в процесі комунікативної взаємодії. Характеристики електронних жанрів розглядаються в залежності від комунікативних цілей, способу взаємодії, текстових форм, композиційних та мовних особливостей.

Окрему увагу приділено різноманітним точкам зору сучасних дослідників на дослідження дискурсу комп'ютерно-опосередкованої комунікації та запропоновано подальші напрями лінгвістичних досліджень сучасного комп'ютерного дискурсу.

Ключові слова: комп'ютерний дискурс, комп'ютерно-опосередкована комунікація, комп'ютерно-опосередкований дискурс, соціолінгвістика комп'ютерної комунікації, жанри, цифрова комунікація, цифровий дискурс.

Statement of the problem. Modern communication space has undergone major changes due to the rapid spread of the Internet and mobile communication. The nature of human communication has been significantly influenced by the development of digital technologies. Digital communication undoubtedly continues to change our experience of social interaction. However, the most significant qualitative changes in digital communication are the transfer to the public area rather than private space, expanded opportunities for self-expression and self-identification offered by digital media, and the always-on nature of devices and networks. 'People can make communication more visible in more ways than in any time in history, yet they have far less control over how (and by whom) that communication is viewed' [17]. In addition, online users not only produce texts and share them with extraordinary ease, but also receive feedback, making people active creators. Interactive writing spaces, such as blogs and social networking sites, enable different forms of social interaction than traditional conversation and written texts [17]. The researchers can draw on a wide variety of socially oriented language disciplines whose methods and research tools can be helpful in conducting empirical research.

The linguistic study of computer-mediated communication tries to clarify the key analytical concepts in modern discursive studies, primarily the concept of digital discourse, and the linguistics of digital communication, as well as methods for studying a digital language. The term *computer-mediated communication* is presented among the already established linguistic concepts along with *digital discourse*, *computer discourse*, *computer-mediated discourse*, *sociolinguistics of computer communication*, *language*, and *digital communication* [2; 5; 10; 12; 13; 20]. It is assumed that digital technologies, due to the different configurations of modes and the material available, simultaneously make possible new types of social practices, and change the way people par-

ticipate in the old ones. Therefore, such digital technologies should be characterized by unity of goals, identities, and relationships.

Analysis of recent research and publications.

The concept of *discourse* in the twenty-first century became the focus on attention of researchers, who pay attention not only to linguistics but also to extra-linguistic factors. (N, Baron, D. Cunningham, S. Herring, E. Lee, A. Romiszowski, J. Walther & J. Jang, M. Yao & R. Ling and others).

Susan Herring studied *computer-mediated communication* from 1985 to 2017 and described the topics preferable for computer-mediated discourse analysis researchers at each stage [9]. S. Carr stated the necessity to register computer-mediated communication as a structured subdiscipline [3]. L. Chong analyzed the linguistic perspectives on computer-mediated communication [4, pp.24-27].

M. Beißwenger expressed their views on the need of creating a structured catalog of existing speech genres used in computer communication, and classify them according to the degree of complexity [1]. Analyzing the features of computer-mediated communication in computer discourse, A. Mason and C. Carr described the communication in a computer-mediated discourse as an object of study, where the linguistic and textual features of scientific network discourse are described [13, p. 244].

Purpose of the article. The focus of this article is on the discursive aspect of the computer-mediated communication study. Sharing the opinion of C. Hafner that the communicative space of the Internet contributes to the development of new genres, causing, in turn, the intensive development of genre studies [8], we set the goal of analyzing the linguistics studies about the discourse in computer-mediated communication, approaches to its study and description.

The purpose of this article is to review modern approaches to studying the computer-mediated communication discourse and analyze recent sci-

entific works on modern genres development and classification.

Presenting main material. In linguistics, the concept of *discourse* has undergone various additions and changes. T. Van Dijk defined discourse through the concept of *text*, while the text was often considered as part of the discourse or its basic unit. Some researchers believe that the text is a product of discourse; others combine these concepts [18]. In our opinion, discourse is always a text, but not vice versa. While discourse is a real speech element, the text is not directly tied to reality; it is an abstract mental construction that is realized in discourse [5; 18]. Discourse is a collection of semantic texts, related by the communicative and functional aspects. T. Van Dijk describes the discourse as the units of verbal communication and believes that they should be studied from the holistic approach, but taking into account social factors as well [18].

From the point of view of J. Walther, the discourse of computer-mediated communication is a sequence of statements, which can affect the patterns of a personal experience, ideas, and beliefs. The discourse is characterized by the sequence of statements caused by external and internal factors [19, p. 11].

S. Herring suggested that computer-mediated discourse is a broad concept covering the language system and speech activities, as well as the text. Language as an abstract system is realized through discourses. Consistently, since communication always takes place in a specific social sphere, we are faced with the analysis not of discourse in general, but any specific discourse: public discourse, political discourse, social discourse, personal discourse, etc. [10, pp. 26-31].

The main characteristic of computer-mediated discourse is the construction of social meanings. Discourse does not act as a tool of reflection, expression, or meaning, but as a *mode of operation*. According to N. Baron, the computer-mediated type of discourse involves the construction and reconstruction of the sociocultural institution. At the same time, an institution should be understood as a set of formal and informal rules that regulate a certain range of social relations. Computer-mediated discourse as a subject of study is not only a structure but a system of rules for interaction [2, pp. 61-74].

In the J. Danowski model, computer-mediated discourse is just an analytical way of solving certain problems. At the same time, they identify the following aspects of discourse as linguistic characteristics of discourse (syntax and style); semantics; pragmatics (typological features of possible discourse recipients and creators, goals and statements objectives);

discursive reflection. The author proposes to consider computer-mediated discourse in the system of its main parameters and meanings. Discourse modeling will make it possible to highlight the specific features of institutional discourse [6]. As for the varieties of computer-mediated discourse, the differences between them are rather arbitrary.

Recently, the researchers increased their interest in scientific discourse for special scientific fields. The product of a scientific discursive act is a scientific text associated with a certain level of scientific achievements in a particular scientific field, as well as with the genre. The creators of scientific discourse are the researchers participating in academic communication as any representative of the scientific community, who express their doubts, argue, and criticize any scientific statements. The main goals of scientific discourse include the following: 1) problem identification and the subject of study determination; 2) the issue analysis; 3) a hypothesis and the purpose of the study formulation; 4) the choice of methods and research material justification; 5) building of a theoretical model; 6) the results of observations and experiments presentation; 7) the study results comments and discussions; 8) the study expert assessment; 9) the area of the practical application of the obtained results determination; 10) the presentation of the results in a form acceptable to specialists and non-specialists [19; 20]. The scientific discourse genres traditionally include a scientific article, a monograph, a dissertation, a scientific conference report, a technical report, a review, an abstract, annotation, theses, etc. Nowadays, the genre system of scientific discourse is significantly influenced by computer communication, which erases the boundaries of formal and informal discourse. A scientific text is implemented at several levels of textual organization: typological (implementation of traditional genre forms; structural and semantic; speech inclusions of various types from other scientific texts [20].

The scientific discourse can be closely connected with pedagogical discourse, implemented in the system of higher education [5]. Due to some similarities in functions of scientific and pedagogical discourses, they can be considered as a single paradigm of specialized scientific and educational interaction. The characteristic features of scientific texts of various genres include harmony, consistency, objectivity, use of terminology, and unbiased. Unlike scientific texts, educational scientific texts are designed to solve learning problems, develop the scientific system of knowledge, and generally accepted scientific concepts and laws. Such texts are distinguished by clarity, availability, presented information accentuation,

and assessment addressed to readers with a certain level of academic competencies. Academic communication can be described as a creative discourse characterized by content transparency and predictability [5, p. 373].

Nowadays, scientific interaction is increasingly carried out through the Internet. Among the Internet technologies most frequently used by academic network communities, we can mention electronic forums, chats, Internet conferences with further discussion of the posted articles, electronic journals, electronic libraries, etc. [9]. Communication in electronic discourse is rather artificial as electronically mediated communication differs from direct communication. However, it expands the scope of academic interaction through opportunities for higher interactivity.

The genres of computer-mediated communication are described mostly on the material of English resources. The features of the English-language Internet communication, the language means involved, as well as extralinguistic aspects of the communication are considered in the work of L. Chong [4]. The structure elements and the language tools classification of the texts of Internet forums and their functional specifics are described by C. Carr [3].

Y. Tang and K. Hew explore the features of electronic lexicographic hypertext, revealing the role of hypertextuality and interactivity in the functional-style and genre [16]. J. Walther suggests a strategy for the features of an electronic textbook, stating that a special type of text has been formed, i.e. emergent register or genre. The electronic textbook is considered the background of the genre in the scientific style and computer-mediated communication [19].

The second direction in the computer discourse study is represented by the development of genre classifications in computer-mediated communication. The description of computer-mediated communication genres suggested by E. Lee is analogical to the genres of traditional communication and includes general genres and new ones presented in electronic media, as well as scientific, educational, and special data genres, artistic and literary genres; entertainment genres; business and commercial genres [12].

D. Cunningham attributes the *electronic genres* a website, home page, electronic library, electronic magazine, email, chat, guest book, bulletin boards, program collections, catalogs, commercial announcements, and advertising banners and divides these genres into two large groups: genres of written texts and hybrid genres of written and oral text [5].

A. Meier and L. Reinecke attributed the Internet information space to such groups as advertising,

professional information, and free information created by enthusiasts. The authors suggested considering e-mail, bulletin boards, chats, online conferences and forums, online-offline conferences and forums, blogs, WIKI, and online literature as the main genres [14]. T. Erickson expressed an idea to regard all currently existing computer-mediated communication genres corresponding to their media and functional aspects. The classification of computer-mediated communication genres takes into account the genres in different Internet resources. The functional classification considers the main function of genres in the process of communicative interaction and includes information genres for presenting or receiving some information; social genres for satisfying communication needs; directive genres for encouraging the addressee to act; presentation genres for self-expression; aesthetic genres for the realization of the artistic and creative potential and an impact from a virtual reality; entertainment genres for enjoying the performance in the virtual world [7, p. 10].

One of the directions of digital genre theory is the development of models for digital genre description. In the work of J. Walther, the characteristic of electronic genres is determined by a set of parameters, which cover thematic feature, communicative goal, communication spheres, author-reader image, mode of synchronous/asynchronous interaction, objectification form or proximity to oral or written text, dialogue/polylogue, composition, linguistic features. The thematic attribute consists of the subject selection for information exchange, depending on the communication purpose, status-oriented or personality-oriented communication. The image of the author-reader depends on the principle of user interaction many to one, one to one, one to many, or many to many. The synchronous/asynchronous interaction highlights messages that approximate the written form of the language and simulated spoken dialogue. A virtual dialogue or polylogue depends on the number of conversation participants. Subjectivity, assessment, and non-standardization belong to linguistic features [19].

According to A. Mason and C. Carr, the classification of the electronic communication genres should take into account the characteristics of hypertextuality (the text comprehension and hyperlinks type); the possibility of poly code texts creation; the environment interactivity, leading to the genres hybridization and polygenre appearance; synchronous/asynchronous communication; information update frequency; electronic text addressee; text author; Internet resource location [13].

In our opinion, the most detailed model for digital genre classification is the algorithm developed by C. Jebari, who suggested using media, pragmatic, structural-semantic, and lingo-stylistic parameters at describing the computer-mediated communication genres. Media parameters represent the genre design, hypertextuality, multimedia, synchronism, interactivity, the number and explication of communicants; pragmatic parameters include the addressee, author, purpose, and scope of communication; structural and semantic parameters describe the topic development and text units; the lingo-stylistic parameters of a genre are the linguistic means used in the text of this genre [11, pp. 83-89].

The controversial areas of the digital genre studies are unclear definitions of the digital genre, the correlation between paper and digital genres, the degree of technical environment influence on the new genres' appearance, and the modification of paper genres transferred to electronic communication [11] since the technological progress is a background in the process of new genres development: the way of the

genres' development depends on the technical means determining the communication format.

Conclusions. We have considered some approaches to the study of the computer-mediated communication discourse and described the main characteristics of modern electronic discourse, which in the academic and educational environment is mainly understood as a standardized type of communication, due to a certain type of communication participants' activities and regulated by the genre forms and content.

The plurality of positions regarding the principles of classification of computer-mediated communication genres and approaches to their description is explained by the fact that the theoretical and methodological background for the genres' development description in the electronic environment is formed simultaneously with the genres, and technological progress is significantly ahead of linguistic studies. A promising direction in the study of the computer-mediated communication genres is in combination with the entire genre diversities, intra-genre variation, and the new genres development.

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