

THE LINGUISTIC NORM AND RULES OF THE SPEECH ACTIVITY

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Language is a universal means of communication for people to influence and affect each other. As the unique means of saving experience and transferring knowledge, language is the foundation the consistency of which ensures successive development of the human society and the state. In monolingual states linguistic issues seldom cause social collisions, while in the countries with linguistically detached social groups language problems may become state problems.

The linguistic policy of any state is determined by the fact that its power bodies as socially significant participants of communication are vitally interested in the efficiency of their functional influence. Therefore, ensuring preconditions for effective influence on members of the society is an important constituent of such a policy.

State regulation in the sphere of language cannot avoid touching a few aspects of the speech activity. First, it is the choice of the language/languages for school and university education, office-work and legal proceedings; for publishing the results of researches. Second, it is regulating the speech communication on the basis of the equality of languages when executive and legislative power bodies use several languages. Third, it is regulating the speech activity, normalization of speech, rule-making the norm within the bounds of one particular language.

While the decision on the state status of a language is mainly political, establishing of linguistic rules and regulations needs linguist efforts. The point is that the order of using linguistic means (i.e., lexical units and grammatical rules of the language) is determined by the objective

character of the language system and social nature of the language. Taking into consideration these characteristics requires special knowledge. Scientifically based conventional rule-making decisions ensure social use of the same norms for centuries.

Language rules may be not fully fixed in academic (i.e. comprehensively detailed) manuals. Socially recognized use of the language may not be normatively evaluated by experts; normative speech facts may not be used in speech activity. Such conditions take place due to the gap between customary usage of linguistic means by speakers of the language and linguistic norms, i.e., rules of language use, codified by linguists and fixed in authoritative manuals, which serve as the language standard realized in various language patterns.

Customary usage is an established practice of using the language from the very childhood; it means habits and ways of speech activity formed in different layers of the society and fixed in the social mentality apart from rule-making activities of linguists. Customary usage of the language in all those speech acts is studied by linguists to establish scientifically based (i.e. systemic) linguistic norms. Every native speaker of the language is familiar with the customary usage from his childhood. Customary usage presupposes not only speaking habits in everyday and professional speech of those who live in the same region, i.e., experience

of the colloquial speech (including mistakes, imitations, euphemisms, etc.) but also rules regulating standardized literary language, that is, fixing the order of language use in written speech on certain purposes and under certain conditions (official, scientific, and journalistic styles).

Any codified norm is based on the customary usage that also causes all changes in normative valuations of language use. When the customary usage and the norm come into conflict with each other, customary usage proves to be stronger than norm, because customary usage is exercised since childhood, whereas norm is specially learned. According to the popular attitude, linguistic norms are the rules of orthoepy, orthography, and grammar that we learn at school. Meanwhile, linguistic norms that generalize steady collective ideas about what is correct or incorrect in the individual speech activity and evaluate communicative success or failure of the particular language use in certain situations are based on studying a wider group of phenomena: system regularities of formal means expressing language contents; connotative characteristics of words; rules and techniques of communicating, etc. According to S.I. Ozhegov:

Норма — это совокупность наиболее пригодных («правильных», «предпочитаемых») для обслуживания общества средств языка, складывающихся как результат отбора языковых элементов из числа со-

*существующих, наличествующих, образуемых вновь или извлекаемых из пассивного запаса прошлого в процессе социальной, в широком смысле, оценки этих элементов*¹.

In general, norm is *“наиболее распространенные из числа сосуществующих, закрепившиеся в практике образцового использования, наилучшим образом выполняющие свою функцию языковые (речевые) варианты”*².

Thus, the linguistic norm based on the customary usage and being a part of it selects only those features of the usage which correspond to system regularities of the language, are used by native speakers of all social strata, and are not fixed only on a limited territory. Properly formed and codified, the norm as a system of the socially accepted speech activity withstands its territorial, social and temporal variants. Conservatism is a significant characteristic of the norm; it helps the norm to overcome unsteadiness and variability of the usage and accept only those new elements of the usage that do not contradict to fundamental regularities of the language system.

Literary language consists of a complex of linguistic norms. It differs from other forms of the language by its full social function and applicability to all human activities.

There are two major aspects within the linguistic norm: language normative standard and language normalization.

Language normative standard is associated with the standard of the language, that is, a complex of words and rules of their use, which is regarded as neutral. Under neutrality we understand the characteristics of a linguistic unit as commonly used, which makes it usable in any functional style of the literary language.

Speech normative standard is the use by the speaker of the norms of a literary language which are considered neutral in any functional style of speech.

Language normalization is associated with stylistic patterns of the language, i.e., of the complex of units and rules which represent the linguistic norm in a particular style.

Speech normalization is manifested in observing norms of the literary language according to a particular functional style. Unlike neutrality of the language standard, stylistic patterns have complementary qualities. Normalization implies that linguistic means of the literary language may have stylistic colouring other than neutral.

Stylistically marked linguistic means present a substantial part of the literary language. These means are not a part of the normative means of the literary language but parallel to them. Use of stylistically coloured linguistic means helps the

¹ Cit.: Skvortsov L.I. *Teoreticheskiye osnovy kultury rechi*. M., 1980, p.40.

² Rozental D., Telenkova M. *Slovar-spravochnik lingvистических терминов*. M., 1976, p.210.

speaker express additional axiological and qualifying meanings alongside with the main meaning of the utterance.

Sometimes, when we consider abusive or obscene words, normative vocabulary is contrasted to non-normative vocabulary. By this, the lexicon of the literary language is opposed to the urban colloquial lexicon which was not used in printed texts earlier. In a sense, such opposition is justified when we mean that abusive and obscene words under normalization are classified in special groups on the far periphery of the literary language. Their use in literary Russian is strictly limited within fiction literature, while they are inadmissible in all other styles of the literary language. However, the concepts admitted in this article presuppose opposition between normative standard and normalization. If it is possible to say, all linguistic means that compose the literary language are normalized but not all of them are normative. Admittedly, only neutral linguistic means that are part of the language standard can be considered normative.

Normative style means common linguistic units used in a particular style of the literary language in a certain speech form. Stylistic features of linguistic means reproduce functional stratification of the literary language into two large groups, not only in its vocabulary but also in its grammar rules: written forms of speech and colloquial forms of

speech. Variability of purposes realized in speech predetermines differences between functionally conditioned forms of speech communication. In accordance with them, we distinguish between the following official (written) styles: business, administrative-legal, social-political, journalistic, scientific. They are contrastive to the styles of non-official (colloquial) speech: everyday informal, professional, urban popular, dialectal.

Linguistic means that constitute the customary usage of the literary language are also divided into layers in accordance with their chronological (obsolete — new) attribution and with their emotional and expressive (from favourable to derogatory) valuation.

Styles of literary fiction and poetry stand by themselves because they are integral. The language of fiction uses all expressive means of the literary language: informative potential of normative means and expressive-informative potential of normalized means of customary usage. Linguistic norms are applicable to the language of fiction only in its external forms, orthography and syntax. Yet even these rules may be not in use in fiction since such texts are often written and live according to the laws of creation.

Normalization of the language, fixed in dictionaries and grammars, is the result of linguist activities. Linguistic means that are used and identified by all native speakers,

are normalized by system-structure rules, that is, codification is implemented through references to language regularities confirmed by customary usage and acknowledged by native speakers. Such linguistic norm is natural and interpretable in a descriptive mode.

When there is no identity in the use of a linguistic unit, its normalization is established artificially and the linguistic norm is purposely introduced. In such cases, they use a prescriptive mode when the norm is established through references to the opinion of linguists and literary professionals (writers, scholars, editors and other specialists who, by profession, must know not only the customary usage of several literary styles but the language norm itself, the normative language).

Artificial norms prove to be the weakest link in the process of establishing language norm because they may cause conflicts in speech activity which is often based on the variable customary usage. For example, all efforts of linguists to implement into the collective mentality the normative accent in the personal forms of the verb *звонить* resemble Sisyphean toil: the non-normative stress is made regularly.

Normalizing of linguistic facts is usually based on three main criteria: consistence with system potentials of the language, regular repeatability, and social approbation by the educated speakers (speakers of the literary language). When one

of these criteria is inapplicable on some objective reason, such artificial norm will be inevitably rejected by the society. Particularly, a politically motivated change of spelling or use of some words can result only in excessive variability, which norm should, according to the rule, remove. For example, in the Internet the word *Таллинн* is spelled in this form 6 million times, whereas *Таллин* is spelt 4 million times; the prepositional phrase *в Украине* is used on 62 million sites, whereas *на Украине* is used on 60 million sites. The word *Кыргызстан* is spelt so 6 million times, whereas *Киргизия* is spelt 10 million times.

In spite of this, normalization of the language by linguists is necessary because it reveals regularities of the main body of the language, replenish the language standard; removes obsolete units; establish new speech patterns; upgrades modes of description of the standard language; protects the literary language from spontaneous common use. For example, according to the current linguistic rules the initial word in the name *Государственная дума* must begin with the capital letter, while the second word — with the lower-case letter, since the second word *дума* is a common noun. Cf.: *Госдума, Мурманская областная дума*. When the only word *Дума* is used, this word is spelt with the capital letter as a proper noun. Yet the Constitution of the RF spells the name as *Государственная Дума*.

The reason for such spelling is that *Дума* is a proper name similar to the name *Российская Федерация*. Consequently, widely used are forms such as: *Саратовская областная Дума, комитет Областной Думы, председатель областной думы*.

This is the result of insufficient normalizing activity of linguists. They are supposed to work out and advocate unified orthographic rules. Users of language manuals want them up-to-date and complete. (They must be up-to-date in covering all current facts of the normalized language. They must be complete in describing all current linguistic phenomena: lexical types and syntactic structures.) The dictionary and grammar must fully describe two types of phenomena: system phenomena applicable to the general rule (descriptive norms), and prescriptive norms that substantiate the choice among the customary variants.

The results of normalization of the Russian vocabulary are represented in general and special dictionaries; yet the results of normative descriptions of syntax and discourse are not published enough. Meanwhile, syntactic means of the language used in written speech are susceptible to the word order that determines the informative structure of the sentence. Any deviation from the usual order of words signals to the listener for special interpretation of the speech. Therefore word order is normalized by the rules of speech. This explains

for limited possibility of the written text to transfer the speaker's communicative task by means of actual segmentation (which is expressed by intonation in oral speech). For example, language norm for the bookish style prescribes choosing such order of words in which syntactically connected members of the sentence close to each other do not break the neutrality of intonation. According to the norm, an adjective in the attributive phrase must precede the noun. In this case, the prosodic kernel will coincide with the key word of the phrase. When the author uses inversion the syntactic and prosodic focuses of the sentence disagree. Such mode of constructing a sentence is normalized as colloquial. Cf.: *Вдруг передо мною рытвина глубокая* (Lermontov); *Ну, молодые люди входят к товарищу, у него обед прощальный* (Tolstoy.); *Я понял, что мысли мои не стоят гроша медного* (Chekhov). *Мох седой далеко вокруг нивы, на сотни верст лежит, на нем сосенки курносые в рост человека и берёзки корявые могут только расти* (Prishvin).³ The inversive noun phrase is also qualified as colloquial. Cf.: *Грушницкого страсть была декламировать* (Lermontov); *Этот самый старичок, с узелком-то, генерала Жукова дворовый...* (Chekhov).⁴

³ Russkaya grammatika. M. 1980, v. II, § 2156, p. 204.

⁴ Ibid. § 2158, Notes, p. 205.

The rule of lexical neutrality for normative linguistic means is determined by the communicative purpose of official styles, i.e., creation of the comprehensible text. For this, the text must be unambiguous, definite and objective. Under the objective expression we understand the appeal to the rational thought of the reader. In normative written speech it is not recommended to use words which are normalized in colloquial (non-official) styles of speech. For example, in the text “*Президент России Дмитрий Медведев заявил в послании Федеральному собранию, что в российском обществе демократическое устройство уже не ассоциируется с хаосом, бессилием и деградацией*” all the words are used according to the norm, they correspond to the official style of written speech.

Yet, in oral speech when intonation of the speaker becomes one of the crucial means of affecting the audience the linguistic norm allows expressing personal attitude to the facts within the means normalized for oral speech. With this, it should be mentioned that nowadays emotionally coloured means are used more often. Cf. in his speech at the Federal Assembly **President D. Medvedev** said: «*предпринимателей «замучали» проверками и «наездами» по коммерческим наводкам ... надо, чтобы и наши правоохранительные органы, и органы власти перестали «кошмарить» бизнес..».*

In whole, as to the normative standard of the text, we must take

into consideration both aspects of the linguistic norm: normative standard of the valid linguistic means and their normalization relative to the language standard. Analyzing the language of legislative acts of the RF we can see that the codes use exclusively normative lexical and grammatical linguistic means. In total, there are about 8.5 thousand such words in the codes. Apart from proper names and their derivatives (*Россия, РСФСР, СССР, РФ, Беларусь, Бразилия, Канада, США, etc.; Москва, Санкт-Петербург, Париж, etc.; европейский, дальневосточный, черныбыльский, южно-африканский, etc.*) they use words which are not included into academic explanatory dictionaries (about 120 words). Among such words are technical terms (*абандон, авалист, аддендум, актуарий, аннуитет, варрант, вермикулит, делькредере, диспач, диспаш; адвалорный, анадромный, апатит-нефелиновый, бербоут-чартерный, дисбурсментский, etc.*), derivatives formed according to standard productive word-formative models. There are also compound adjectives (*бактериально-паразитический, варено-мороженный, водно-болотный, водно-железнодорожный, военно-вспомогательный, врачебно-трудоовой, командно-измерительный, лимитно-заборный, навигационно-гидрографический; вкусоароматический, водоучитывающий, камнесамоцветный, лесоводственный; внереализационный,*

внесудебный, выправительный, малолетний, многолесный, мягколиственный, неавтономный, неденежный, неуплатный, непроданный, оборотоспособный, etc.); word-formative variants of familiar adjectives (бездокументарный, бесхозный, кварц-пошлинковый, культуртехнический, etc.); nouns derived from familiar bases (агентирование, агрохимикаты, аэроузел, бортоператор, безотзывность, виноматериалы, возвратность, возмездность, гидроресомелиорация, культинвентарь, маслосемена, etc.). We can also come across words which have not yet spread in customary usage of Russian (инжиниринговый). Such words are usually clarified in the text of article of a law, e.g., “К инжиниринговым услугам относятся инженерно-консультационные услуги по подготовке процесса производства” (art.148 of the Tax Code). In the codes, words derived from familiar bases are not explained, as a rule, therefore if such a word is not included in the lexicon its meaning may be vague (uncertain). For example, article 56 par. 1 of the RF Air Law says: “Экипаж воздушного судна состоит из летного экипажа (командира, других лиц летного состава) и cabinного экипажа (бортоператоров и бортопроводников)”. This text uses two words (кабинный and бортоператор) that are not found in explanatory dictionaries. Accordingly, the term cabinный экипаж is vague for in the customary

usage the interior space of the plane includes “кабина” (cockpit/cabin) and “салон” (cabin/compartment). The interpretation of the staff functions formulated in the text of the law interferes with the customary usage of these words. The law does not specify the difference between the “бортопроводники” (flight attendants) and “бортоператоры” (flight operators). We need special research to specify that “бортоператор” (flight operator) is the member of the air crew responsible for loading, unloading, delivery of cargo, etc. Flight operators work on board of cargo aircraft, while flight operators work on passenger aircraft. Presumably, such non-coordination in describing technical vocabulary may cause legal fortuitous events.

Rules of speech activity coordinate with the linguistic norm as to using linguistic means; yet they also mean some complementary significant conditions relative to logical basis of speech communication. In other words, to analyze this text we must take into consideration both its lingual form and communicative purpose set by its author. To solve the problem we need logical analysis of the meaning and purpose of the message alongside with its stylistic designation. To illustrate the task there is the word *момент*, used more than 600 times in the RF codes. It is one of the frequency words used by the legislator. Its normative meaning is a temporal point or a certain short phase in some process. In the follow-

ing context the usage of the expression “момент задержания” may be justified if it shows some temporal characteristics (cf. the Constitution of the RF, art.48, par.2): “Каждый задержанный, заключенный под стражу, обвиняемый в совершении преступления имеет право пользоваться помощью адвоката (защитника) с момента соответственно задержания, заключения под стражу или предъявления обвинения”. If it is not clear what exactly “момент задержания” means, we should admit that the usage of the word is non-normative since its meaning in the text is uncertain, which may cause ambiguity of its interpretation. Another fragment of this text says: “Государственная Дума не может быть распущена с момента выдвижения ею обвинения против Президента Российской Федерации до принятия соответствующего решения Советом Федерации” (the Constitution of the RF, art.109, par. 4). Even theoretically we cannot define the temporal point for the genitive phrase with two compact predicates (each of them correlates with perfect and imperfect verbs). It is like trying to give a quantitative definition to the meaning of the phrase “куча камней”. Quite non-normative is the use of the word *момент* in the phrase “момент осуществления” instead of the word *время*, cf. the **Inland Water Transport Code**, art. 123, par.3: “военные корабли, военно-вспомогательные суда и другие суда, находящиеся

в собственности Российской Федерации, собственности субъектов Российской Федерации или эксплуатируемые ими и используемые в момент осуществления спасательных операций.”. In some cases, **legislative acts use contradictory temporal scaling of events**, cf. The Civil Code of the RF, art.49, par.3: “Правоспособность юридического лица возникает в момент его создания (art.51, par.2) и прекращается в момент завершения его ликвидации (art. 63, par.8)”. However, in those paragraphs the citation refers to the point of time which is replaced by the period of time (in the Civil Code of the RF, art 51, par.2 says: *Юридическое лицо считается созданным со дня внесения соответствующей записи в единый государственный реестр юридических лиц*) or to a certain period of time (art. 63, par. 8: *Ликвидация юридического лица считается завершенной, а юридическое лицо — прекратившим существование после внесения об этом записи в единый государственный реестр юридических лиц*).

Presumably, without linguistic expertizing of univocacy, certainty and objectivity of the language of legislative documents it is difficult to implement the law from the point of view of correspondence of its letter to its meaning. Without meaningful expertise legislative acts formulated by its authors on the fragile basis of intuition and customary usage are doomed to repeating predictable

mistakes. Meanwhile, studying the coherent text should start with analyzing the techniques used by the author to actualize his communicative purposes. Linguistic expertise must inquire into the techniques and ways which, finally, form the reader's perception of the text (i.e., understanding essence of the message and interpreting connections between objects).

I recollect one case (of about fifty cases) when a newspaper article insulted the plaintiff with the obscene word «*мудак*».⁵ Nowadays it is very seldom that such obvious controversies are considered at court. The nature of most problematic points in texts mainly consists of different logical approaches to linguistic facts based on customary usage rather than on erroneous speech activity.

We may consider frequent situations when linguists contradict each other answering the same questions about the same text. Once I was to expertise a text after two colleagues (from the same department) produced two alternative opinions to the court. Yet I do not think that it was caused by commitment or lack of professional competence of the two scholars writing independent reviews. Presumably, linguists are

inclined to analyze any text from the point of view of the general theory and typology of meaningful elements of the language system. Principles and methods of such analysis are well studied and described in linguistics. Meanwhile, expertise that linguists undertake on court decision must clearly explain not only the specific speech situation but also the functional perspective of the utterance. (This perspective makes for transformation of the language semasiology into speech semasiology when word meanings assume unique sense enhanced with knowledge of extralinguistic situation and with certain judgement.) Such attitude ensures objective valuating of both linguistic meanings (fixed by lexicon) and meanings that appear in discourse.

Linguistic expertise must focus on the implicit components of the content which are part of the author's intention. The implicit meaning consciously implied in the text is called subtext. Subtext may be simple or sophisticated, supplementary to or even supplanting the explicit meaning of the text.

There is a good example to illustrate the case of supplanting of explicit linguistic meanings by implicit sense. In 1997 one of city newspapers published the article "*М-кин был 'смотрящим' от 'тамбовцев'?*" The preamble said that the article brings together unprovable speculations and opinions relative to the murder of M-n, vice-president of

⁵ For example, when FranXoise Ducros the press-secretary of the Prime Minister of Canada used the similar word ("moron") about George Bush Jr., she was immediately fired. This case shows evidently that pejorative words against a person cannot be allowed under any circumstances.

“N-e SPb” company. The opening paragraph of the article contained the phrase: *“считается, например, что “тамбовскому” сообществу принадлежат такие предприятия, как “Б-ская финансово-промышленная группа” ... “Б.-трейд” и некоторые другие предприятия”*.

The management of both companies decided that the article contains information discrediting their business reputation and sued the newspaper in the arbitration court.

A few conditions proved to be crucial in the expert judgement of the text:

1. The author used the expressions *“существует устойчивое мнение”*, *“существует мнение”*, *“считается”*, *“также ходят слухи”* to spread unsubstantiated statements about circumstances of M-n’s death.

2. Strictly speaking, the article did not contain any references to competent sources, nor was it backed by any testable arguments. Yet it indicated as the only reason of M-n’s death the war between two conflicting criminal groups for redistribution of the market of oil products.

3. Since the article was written as a journalist inquiry, though the text did not contain any facts or competent references, the reader came to the inevitable conclusion that the phrases like *“существует мнение”* or *“ходят слухи”*, in fact, implied the author’s opinions *“считаю обоснованным”*, *“мне достоверно известно”*. Therefore, rendering

speculations, the article was perceived as the author’s qualification of personal morals of the management (*“члены тамбовского преступного сообщества”*).

Court of first appearance declared the article discrediting business reputation of the plaintiffs and obliged the newspaper to publish a disclaimer. **Yet the court of appeal annulled the judgement on the ground of lacking the very fact of spreading discrediting information.**⁶ Probably, from the legal point of view, the decision of appeals instance was correct because “speculations”, being unreliable and unprovable, irrespective of the method of their dissemination, actually, cannot be either proved or disproved. Their existence cannot be objectively inspected.

From the linguist’s point of view, the article did discredit business reputation of the plaintiffs, because the text indicating the speculations and opinions implies for the reader the existence of facts that caused these speculations.

As is well-known, alongside with codified sign information, use of a word in speech implies various presuppositions conditioned by knowledge of the world, i.e., its natural relations — causative, temporal, spatial, associative, connotative, and so on, which the listener knows

⁶ Zashchita delovoy reputatsii. Sudebnaya practica. Postanovlenie ot 17 marta 1998 // Arbitrazhniye spory № 3–4. 1998. P. 111–112.

naturally. Such relations may not be explicit in the text, although their presupposition may lead the listener to deductive and inductive inferences under the influence of text perception. Such relationship between two facts results from the logical operation “if ... then ...” or “if A ... then B ...” and is called implication. In this case a verbally manifested fact actualizes the thought concerning the other fact, though not expressed verbally. Such implicit meanings may be unconscious and involuntary or conscious and voluntary.

The article about M-n was written in such a manner that the information about discrediting speculations was perceived by the reader as the information about discrediting facts. The declared target of the article — to tell the reader about speculations and opinions — was, in fact, substituted by the author’s point of view. The reader was led to the conclusion (implication) that the firms mentioned in the article are criminal not in the normative (factual) meaning but in the normalized (axiological) meaning. This implication, proved by linguistic means and irrespective of facts, might damage business reputation. If the Act of protection of honour, dignity and business reputation must protect the individual from abusive statements, I think, this case may be considered as clear evidence.

The situation looks less evident when somebody gives a negative valuation to the person’s performance

but not to the person. The freedom of valuating facts (information) is guaranteed by the principle of the freedom of speech limited only by banning a perversion of the facts. It would seem that the freedom of expressing one’s own opinion about facts is limited by the article in the criminal law against slander and does not fall under the law of protection of honour, dignity and business reputation. However, in practice, negative valuation of personal performance is more often than not taken as abusive valuation of the person. Courts accept such matters for processing as cases of protection of honour, yet there is always a latent question of whether the facts mentioned in the text are false, i.e., whether the statements expressed in the text are slanderous. I think, such inquiry is beyond the competence of a linguist.

The object of linguistic expertise is a word, not a fact; therefore we must differentiate the author’s opinion about the person from the author’s opinion about the facts associated with the person. One can assert that any opinion about a person is always a value judgement: good opinion means positive valuation, bad opinion means negative valuation. But if there is some author’s opinion about facts in the text, we must look for the proof whether it means the opinion about the person. Let’s consider the news item “*Бизнес на пеньках*” (“Business on stumps”) published in a popular newspaper.

The author ironically described the activities of Mr. B. — one of the leaders of the local branch of the Green Party. Therefore, Mr. B. sued him at court concerning protection of business reputation.

According to expertise, the tenor of the item adds up to the assertion that B. sets up primary organizations to get money from western philanthropic foundations. This assertion makes the base for the syllogism which may be formulated as follows: if B. heads a few environmental groups it must be of benefit to somebody. The possible implication of the reader was evident: it must be a paying business, and the item led the reader to this implication. Unlike the previous example (the article about speculations and firm opinion against the “Tambov gangsters”), this item used factual information (below there is the list of facts and, in brackets, examples illustrating them in the text):

1. 11 primary environmental organizations are registered in B.’s office.

2. All these organizations have the same telephone number, namely, B.’s office telephone.

3. B. is a co-chairman of the local “Green Party”.

These facts are mentioned in the beginning of the item (*В тесном кабинете зарегистрировано... 11 экологических организаций. Все они откликаются на один и тот же телефон председателя “Партии зеленых” (В.).*

4. B. heads the organizations whose legal address is B.’s office. (*Неутомимый В. денно и ночью руководит такими мощными формированиями, как «Общественный комитет по борьбе с организованной экологической преступностью», «Зеленый союз», «Молодежная инспекция по охране природы», «Группа спецконтроля за памятниками природы» и некоторыми другими.*)

5. The effects of the activities of these organizations are difficult to check.

6. Some of these organizations receive financial support from the West. (*Трудно увидеть воочию результаты работы и актив всех этих групп и союзов, но В. это волнует мало. Главная его страсть — гранты. Да, да, элементарная финансовая помощь с Запада, которая нет-нет да и капнет то в одну, то в другую дутую организацию. Вот и весь секрет титанической работоспособности В.).*

7. To receive financial support he uses the manual “How to get a grant”.

8. There is an organization for extrasensory protection of the fern.

9. After some newly registered organization performs a socially significant action, to provide its further activity it applies for a grant at a western environmental foundation (in Sweden, France, Finland, etc.).

10. Sometimes the money comes on current accounts of such organizations. (*Никакой тайны здесь нет. Среди наших доморощенных эколо-*

гов уже давно в ходу методическая брошюра-распечатка под заголовком: «Как обеспечить грант». С помпой создается, скажем, организация по использованию экстра-сенсорики в целях охраны ...папоротников (и такая зарегистрирована в рабочем кабинете В.). О ней объявляется через информационное агентство, выдумывается пара акций, затем следуют заявки на матпомощь в экологические фонды Швеции, Франции Финляндии и т.п. Иногда это срабатывает, доверчивые иностранцы присылают кругленькую сумму в долларах, и сумма эта позволяет «крутить динамо» дальше).

11. The local branch of the “Green Party” started dissociating themselves from В. as the co-chairman of their party.

12. Among the organizations registered with В.'s participation is the “League of protection of the city nettle”. (Слов нет, В. — талантливый человек. Настолько талантливый, что местная партия «зеленых» уже начинает открешиваться от своего слишком предприимчивого сопредседателя. Мол, с живыми браконьерами надо бороться, а не «первичные организации» плодить. Но ведь кому что ближе. Так что, если добрый Запад скоро выделит грант для «Лиги защиты городской крапивы», не удивляйтесь — это еще одно детище предприимчивого эколога).

The author gives evaluative characteristics to the facts to reach the

pragmatic goal, that is, to persuade the reader that the information is true and its interpretation is objective.

Of importance is the allusion in the opening paragraph which sets the ironical tone for the text. The literary allusion to one of the characters of “The Golden Calf” gives negative colouring to all the facts listed further and becomes a major premise to the polysyllogism within the framework of the text. (Когда Александр Иванович Корейко основал в жилой комнате химическую артель “Ревани” и с большим портфелем отправился собирать кредиты, он не знал, что у него найдутся последователи куда более изобретательные).

The logical content of any text presupposes “solution of equation”, that is, modeling the communicative process which forms the text. Analyzing the natural language demonstrates that, apart from the diversity of ways for actualizing inferences, in common texts presuppositions (presumptions) are usually omitted. From the formal point of view, such lacunas in the text must be perceived as deviation from the standards of complete transferring of meaning according to certain logical patterns, but it does not happen in virtue of habitualness of such lacunas. Though the omitted argument is usually a common truth that does not need argumentation, the speaker may set his or her own “truths” which may differ from those generally acknowledged or scientifically

proved. Therefore, any text expertise must verify the facts mentioned in the text according to the criterion of their truth. Checking this criterion does not make a part of linguistic expertise. These theoretical foundations made the basis for the general conclusion: if all facts mentioned in the item are true to reality, their interpretation reflects the essence of the situation since the logic of the arguments is recoverable without gaps and normative from the point of view of the language. The linguistic means used in the text do not damage the plaintiff's honour and dignity.

The text may not contain any negative references to a person but is annoying for him in this or that way. To illustrate I can comment upon the expertise conducted on the decision of P-k court. The plaintiff requested compensation for moral damage caused upon him by two items, «*П-маш завод в позе лотоса*» and «*Распальцовка в виде лотоса*», published in the local newspaper. The plaintiff insisted that the expression «*...выполняют лишь роль ширмы*» implied «*его нечестность, недобросовестность по отношению к третьим лицам, его желание прикрыть своими действиями намерения и действия другого лица*», and the author of the articles used the word «*распальцовка*» to classify the plaintiff's performance as criminal.

The expertise stated that the phrase «*...выполняют лишь роль ширмы*»

means «*служат прикрытием для кого-, чего-л.*» but it is not offensive by itself. The expression must be extended with a sentence to define the meaning of the word «*ширма*» in this very article. Establishing correlation between the subject of the main clause and subjects of subordinate clauses in this fragment helps conclude that the author does not refer the phrase «*...выполняют лишь роль ширмы*» to the persons but to the names of the spouses S.: «*за ширмой скрывается имя истинного владельца*». In other words, the author of the item, actually, asserts that the *names* of the S-s' couple serve as a screen to cover the real *name* of the stockholder. The fragment under consideration mentions only names, and the journalist avoids assessing S-s' personality, though (without discrediting the couple's honour and dignity) expresses his opinion as to what extent their stockholding is independent.⁷ The text does not contain any other meanings, although it perhaps provides a ground for arbitrary implications. So in his letter published in the same newspaper, S-s' charge, («*ширма*» — *такую роль в семье определил для меня и моей жены автор*»), is unsubstantiated. Thus, objectively, in this text the expression «*...выполняют лишь роль ширмы*» does not mean assessing personal qualities of the plaintiff.

⁷ The author thought that the real stockholder of the plant was the S-s' son-in-law.

By the way, in the text the author's opinion about the dependent stockholding was founded by some arguments whose truth or falsity was linguistically impossible to check.

As to the word "*распальцовка*", the expertise asserted that, it is on the fringes of the Russian literary language and is used in the youth slang to denote the so-called "new Russians" (a heterogeneous social group of the newly rich). The word "*распальцовка*" refers to gestures of the newly rich emphasizing their significance, authority and reliability. The word belongs to the same semantic group with the word *понт* and means "impressive airs; self-importance; presumption; arrogance; haughtiness". The word is a product of contracting the phrase *делать пальцы веером* (the same meaning as the word "*понтит*", "*держаться с понтом*").

On the one hand, the title "*Распальцовка в виде лотоса*" structurally unites the collection: introduction rendering the preceding publication; S-s' letter to the editors; and the detailed answer to it. It is thought that that way the author defined the semantic pivot of all related items. The word "*лотос*" seems to be used there only to indicate the preceding publication.

On the other hand, the page title refers to S-s' letter assessing its general meaning. From this point of view, the title means "presumption, arrogance of the 'new Russian'" and the editorial answer to the letter co-

incides with the general assessment of it implied in the title.

Notwithstanding the ambiguous meaning of the title "*Распальцовка в виде лотоса*", we may be sure to assert that the title expresses the journalist opinion about S.'s letter but not about S. himself. With this title the journalist states that S.'s letter to the newspaper is "*распальцовка в виде лотоса*". The editorial answer contains facts that prove this opinion.

The expertise concludes that the published articles clearly express the author's opinion about facts, events and relations but not about persons. From the expert point of view, the honour, dignity and reputation of the plaintiff were not damaged, although some implications inevitably made by the reader might seem offensive to the plaintiff and that provoked him into annoyance and disappointment.

This case proves the necessity of seeking an answer to the question: can the expert interpret the text that contains assessment of the person's actions as latently assessing the person? To my mind, thinking over this problem, we must take into consideration the narrow line between actions characterizing the person from all other actions of the person. As a topical example we can use the commonly known phrase of V.V. Putin about the action of circumcising. V.V. Putin's words did not imply any latent assessments of the person but his ironical invitation to Moscow for circumcision after which "*ничего*

не вырастет” provoked the correspondent into a negative emotional reaction. Considering the examples, we can also say that if the author of the article about environmentalist B. had not used *The Golden Calf* allusion but directly said that B. was Koreiko’s offspring or follower, it might have been interpreted as an offence. If the author of the articles about the stockholder would have written that S. was a screen for another person, this would have discredited the plaintiff’s reputation because it would have evaluated the person himself.

The other side of this problem consists in the question: can the expert analyze the meaning of the text to detect any logical contradiction between the conclusion and presupposition?

To answer the question, we should act on the premise that implications under the influence of the perceived information are its derivatives. They belong to the sphere of mental processes provoked by the text and are the facts of the mind and not of the language. In this is a principal difference between linguistic and implicational meanings. Linguistic expertise must be mainly based upon linguistic meanings generated in speech. Investigation of linguistic meanings limits the intensity of interpretation of the text and outlines its objective bounds that separate linguistic analysis of the text from inferences ascribed to the text.

As an example I shall mention the expert opinion of the text

based on logical analysis of its contents. Under the expertise was the item “*Никаких Prodigy в городе не ожидается*” published in an advertising magazine. The plaintiffs insisted that it contained an appeal to disregarding the performance, due to which appeal the band faced the near-empty hall.

The expertise established in the text three assertions about the upcoming performance of the *Music for the Jilted Generation*:

Assertion 1. Round the city there are posters advertising the performance of the British band The Prodigy. (This assertion opens the text: “*Вы наверняка обратили внимание на афиши, расклеенные по городу и рекламирующие концерт во Дворце спорта 25 сентября*”.)

Assertion 2. In actual fact, some other band will perform in The Sport Palace. (This assertion is implied in the second sentence: “*Если у вас еще остались сомнения, то сообщаем — это не Prodigy*”.)

Assertion 3. The managers of the performance do not answer distinctly to questions about the upcoming performance. (This assertion is implied in the sentences of the last but one paragraph of the item: “*На все эти вопросы организаторы дают уклончивые ответы, ссылаясь на неточность условий контракта и нерадивость исполнителей. Мол, кто-то кого-то не так понял*”).

The assertion that “*организаторы концерта дают уклончивые ответы*” is based on the author’s

distrust of the managers of the performance. (*“Учитывая обманчивое оформление афиши, и в остальное верится с трудом”*, i.e., the author doubts whether what the managers promise about the performance is true.). According to the author, the managers manipulate the public. He sees the deceit both in the poster design and in the explanations of the managers. Thus, all the words and acts of the managers turn out to be wrongful, lacking any legal grounds and altogether unjustifiable.

From the article it is evident that the poster uses as a background the cover of the 1994 album of The Prodigy. The poster itself says in Russian: *“25 сентября в 20.00 во Дворце спорта 2 часа безумной энергии”*. Apart from this, the poster shows symbols of a number of firms. There were no other references in the poster.

The managers' words were inserted into the text after the conjunction *“якобы”* (“supposedly”), which demonstrates the author's mistrust of the information: *“По словам организаторов, едет английская группа, в которой якобы играет Лиэм Хаулетт, лидер легендарных Prodigy. Коллектив должен исполнить как свои, так и хиты Prodigy — отсюда и красноречивые афиши. Полтора часовую вечеринку будет вести известный ди-джей, а посетить ее обещает в качестве гостя сам Кейт Флинт”*.

In the author's opinion, the upcoming performance will undoubt-

edly prove his negative assessment of the managers' acts: *“Вы, конечно, можете во всем разобраться сами, купив билет на концерт за 100 или 300 рублей”*.

Thus, in conclusion the author suggests that the readers should think twice before paying 100 to 300 roubles and finding out they were deceived. Following the author's assessment, the reader must come to the inference: since the managers try to deceive me, I should not go to the performance.

The expertise showed that, according to the logic of the text, the author's implication should have been different, namely: the managers try to draw the public to the performance of The Prodigy music but the reader must decide for himself whether he will go to the performance where The Prodigy themselves will not appear.

To assess such texts we need consecutive control of detecting relations between formally expressed linguistic meanings and complex conditions of their actualization. Identifying such contextual relations makes the interpretation of the text. Actual linguistic units must serve as the ground for linguistic interpretation. This approach to text analysis will help work out tools and techniques for objective verification of expert assessments. It will prevent interpreting the text on the ground of subjective occasional inferences.

Translated by T. Kazakova