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SOCIOLINGUISTIC INSIGHTS ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF LINEARITY – AREA – SPACE IN THE GLOBALIZED ELECTRONIC PRESS[1]

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In the newspaper sphere, the media's plan (fact, event, attitude, impact, etc.) is traditionally prepared for perception and processing through a visual channel. A media product in the electronic environment counts with the effect of multicode systems of visual provenance. Journalistic communication, which is electronically determined, respects and utilizes proven and well-established linguistic-compositional and standard typographic patterns and the methods of their printed parallel. At the same time it collaborates with multimedia components at a sociopragmatically effective intersection while using its variations. Consequently, due to the synergetic effect, the linguistic communication dominant features of electronic periodicals might be restructured. The goal of this paper is to outline the levelling-differentiation tendencies of the pillared components, predominantly through the sociolinguistic lens. The findings, statements and outcomes are contrastively discussed in the current electronic press, published in Slavic languages (Slovak, Czech, Croatian, as well as Russian, Belarusian, Serbian and others).

Key words: *globalisation; glocalisation; media communication; multimedia; contrastive linguistics; sociolinguistics*

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1. Inspiration, goals, research problem, theoretical and methodological area

The media's intent, constructed and accepted as a fact, and also as an attitude, persuasion, influence, entertainment, etc., in the journalistic communication sphere, is traditionally prepared for dispatching, processing and use by sight. The media product is designed for effect in a printed version, but, mainly with its variant set into an electronic environment, it naturally counts with the use of multicode systems of visual provenance. From these initial thoughts we can assume that electronically conditioned journalistic communication, in comparison with the traditional dissemination of media products, does not require specialized means and procedures. It conveniently uses the settled language compositional and standard typographic patterns of its printed parallel. This means that when media products are placed into an e-environment, it is effective to work with multimedia components at a socio-pragmatically effective but always unique intersection.

The question is: where are the broader socio-communicative assumptions and the technological conditions for the effective inclusion of the tested "invariant" methods into the electronically determined media communication within the journalistic communication sphere? The 21st century society, perceived as a multilevel society, and characterized by synonyms like *knowledge-based, information, educational, electronic* (Barabási 2006; Bednář 2011; Dolník 2010; Hallin – Mancini 2008; Kopecký et al. 2013; McLuhan 2008; Michalewski 2002)*, global/glocal* (globally-local, see e.g. Beck 2003), *post-* (modern, historic, industrial), *ludic* (playful – from the Latin word for *ludus*), *inter-* (active, media), *commercialized, totally dialogued, visualized, mediated,* etc. (for selected insight see Patráš 2009), deals mostly successfully with the pressure of the electronisation of life and communication interactions. This sociocultural paradigm is identical for various communicating societies regardless of their language, socio-communicative and historical specificities, along with the relationships with the media.

Apart from the productive part of the media communication chain, in an electronic environment it is necessary to take into account the receptive component. On the side of the partner there is a voluntary, a group: collective – individual, passive – active, mass – specialized – interactive user or recipient of media activities, i.e. the audience (to specify the term see Jirák – Köpplová 2003). Out of the group of characteristics that create the backbone of this study, the *voluntary behaviour of the media recipient* is an important one for the interpretation of the mediated communication intention in an electronic environment. Applying these characteristics is important for the expediency of the media message as well: the recipient on the internet does not behave like a "classic" member of the audience, influenced by the mass or *the bonds with the crowd*, which enable elegant fulfilment of a persuasive or entertaining function. The journalist, editorial office or media company then apply specialized methods for the e-environment.

Due to the synergetic effect, the linguistic communication dominant features of electronic periodicals might be restructured. The aim of this paper is to introduce levelling-differentiating trends among the pillared parts of electronic media communication via a sociolinguistic perspective. The attention is focused on a code of systems in their

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collateral or contrastive-confrontational coexistence. By that we mean the relationships between the perception and processing of media content, between written and spoken language, visual and acoustic non-language codes; and themes for reflections about connections with media environment offerings (Bugajski 2001: 75).

We contrastively compare the findings, statements and results with the use of the contemporary electronically mediated press, prepared for effect in Slavic languages and environments. As an argumentative platform for the statements, synthesis and generalization, we can use the results of continuous (since the turn of the century) observations of electronic periodicals, in a total of 140 electronic newspapers and magazines in 6 Slavic languages. [See the list of metainformation systems in the *References* section in the *E-sources* subcategory.]

The notion of "text" is closely related to the passage of time from the genetic-typological, structural, systematic-communication and socio-pragmatic point of view. Linearity is present in every environment in which the text fulfils its expectations or deliberate designation. In visual or visualized communication, on which internet journalism builds its image and prestige as well, not only the temporal and horizontal, but also the vertical dimensions of the text and their intersections are displayed. As a research problem we have the relationship between of linearity – area – space in the press.

A methodologically-methodical area related to the examined issues can be seen in the figure (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 *Theoretical and methodological framework and argumentative area of the issue*

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It is obvious that sociolinguistics, because of its developed connections with a relatively broad scientific spectrum, is capable of integrating even "more distant" disciplines that are more or less connected with linguistics, into a meaningful system. With respect to this potential we will theoretically and argumentatively introduce and interpret the relations between of linearity – area – space in periodicals. We start from the printed environment and, at the same time, with the help of the contrastive method, show the level of similarity and difference between a "traditional" starting point and its forms in an electronic environment.

2. Destruction of e-media, e-communication or favourable intermediality?

To develop the introduced starting points and pursue our objective we will use the common conventional conditions offered by the stable composition of a magazine cover in Fig. 2, thoughtfully compiled as a combination of verbal and non-verbal parts.

Fig. 2 *Prototype situation in a journalistic environment*

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At first glance, the observer sees the dominant communication feature, created and limited by the centre of the cover. The semantic core of the text lies at the focal point, the most significant part of the model's face in the sample. The reader is even able to include, via peripheral vision, without any eye movement, the surroundings of the core. However he/she chooses the secondary visual and content parts and arranges them according to the subconscious programme – the relationship with the dominant feature. The following structured information is created in the recipient's mind: **a)** the model is/will be mentioned inside the magazine and **b)** an attractive frontally displayed woman is *looking (only) at me*.

Simultaneously, or right after the end of the perception process, there comes the interpretation of the text's visual aspect, which is a part of the automatized process. A standard of relation is created or confirmed in the reader's mind: the cover announces the presence of text within the magazine that corresponds with the synchronous stable standard of the model's appearance. By discovering the cooperation between the standards the reader's habit is encouraged, confirming the required stereotype, becoming, after interiorizing, a part of the individual's information. The less relevant construction parts are consciously perceived by automatic omission. We can find a convincing argument for validating the reader's behaviour in the functional covering of one letter in the title of the magazine despite the knowledge that it is an emblematic element/part of the trademark. The recipient, or observer, does not read the title, but he/she definitely knows it.

The prepared reader, who is interested in the latest print and in an ideal position as a member of a supposed or factual target group of recipients, is able to understand without problems, and within a very short time, the distribution among the magazines at a newsstand. The elaborate, automated recognition of the significant (essential, central) and less important (effective, peripheral) information via sight and the strengthening of the active stereotype when interpreting the relationships between them, is the conceptual basis of ready, selective reading and the mental processing of textual graphic patterns. [For an analysis of the professional perception of the magazine cover see Patráš 2011: 28–31]

Cognitive-communication algorithms introduced through relating can be used without any problems, favourably and effectively, in the electronic parallels of printed periodicals, or newspapers and magazines, not counting with their printed counterparts, i.e. *e-zines* (electronic magazines). In the following sections of the paper we will show the changes of the basic traditional "print" models. Relationships between the invariant and variant can be typologically divided into three levels, structured on the general axis – specific and social – of the individual. We argue the levels through the visual examples where we place the vectors, related to the concepts of *linearity – area – space*. The samples and observations are representative, i.e. can be used in electronically conditioned journalistic communication regardless of the language-communication specificities and the sociocultural environment.

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2.1. Variations and complementarity

The first subgroup is comprised of electronically conditional texts, built with respect to the visual-graphic predispositions of a hypertextual environment. When entering the page and perceiving the composition, content and intentions, the user (internaut) orients him/herself according to his/her habits and experience, which regardless of the genre, he/she has gained while viewing other websites. His/her sight effortlessly notices the vertical and horizontal layout of the background (Fig. 3), recognizes and utilises the dominant orientation (Fig. 4) and the delimitational (Fig. 5) function. Finally there is a decision-making process in the recipient's mind: the visitor of a media website/reader orients him/herself within the content and compositional layers of the electronic communication in similar settings, e.g. metainformation periodicals, too (Fig. 6). Here it is necessary to mention that the perception of the graphic model is based on a cursory principle. When the internaut leaves the homepage, invariant, and shifts attention to individually-chosen hypertext sections, his/her attention is bound to the linear, however, vertically-oriented ground plan of the model.

Fig. 3 *Vertical and horizontal perception of the model*

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Fig. 4 *Perception of the information layout of an electronic text*
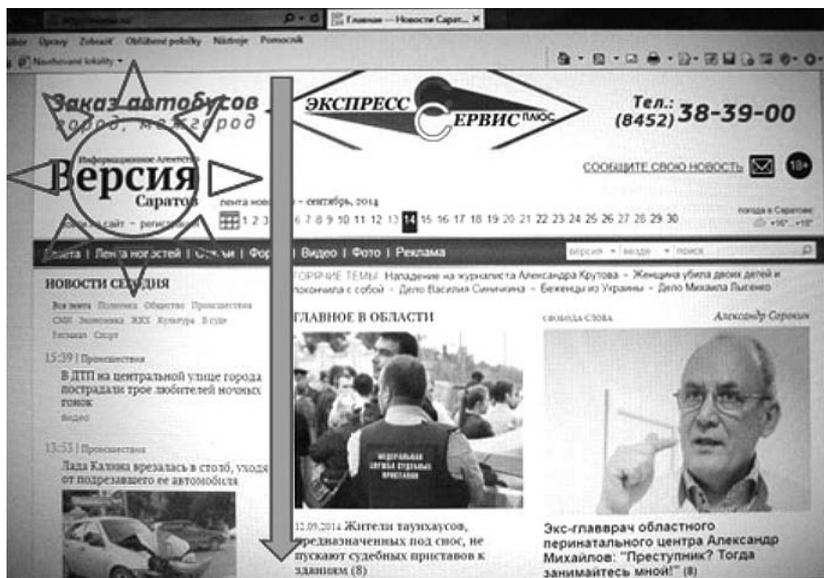
Fig. 5 *Fulfilling of the delimitational function*

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Fig. 6 *Variation of the reception of the metainformation aspect of an e-periodical with a complementary objective*

2.2. Contrasts and convergences

In a particular subgroup, the linear perception of a textual model is applied despite the typological connections of communications with an electronic environment and hypertextuality (Fig. 7). The eye of the experienced user, stepping down from the higher, general and social level to the model (genre) level, is orienting him/herself sub(consciously) in the genre group in the vertical menu of the website and finally decides to follow the chosen media product. The intermediate step, taken on the basis of the observer's decision (or: the finding of the searched for or expected communication), creates a contrast with the used linear perception of a particular text. There is no need to emphasize that a cursory perception in the area of a common website converges in this form into linearity and information-communication, i.e. slower reading.

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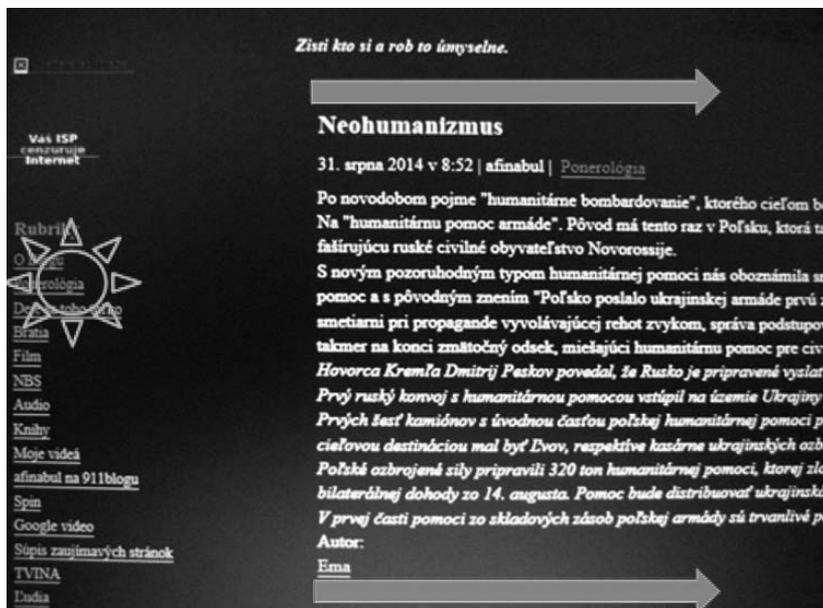
Fig. 7 *Tendencies of the linear perception of the model*

2.3. Global and local

The third form of the examined model platform is the combination of the parameters in an electronically conditioned environment. The user safely locates the required communication, following the path of general and social milestones, at the same time specific and individual (Fig. 8). This typological subgroup in the media hypertext area is very common, but internally divided. It is shown as a dynamic platform, and acts as a ready and practical user method for a skilful, "eager" interlocutor. After the linear-spatial perception of the model on the increasing line there comes the one way, mostly vertical, but evidently extended perception of the model, with peripheral sections (Fig. 9). If the user counts with following the subsequent text discussion, or wants to participate in it, by returning to areal and cursory perception, he/she is looking for the signal icon to enter the "discussion board" (Fig. 10). After entering the discussion and returning to the initial text he/she again uses the linear or areal perception of the media product. The outcome of the pragmatically changed procedure is the creation of a complex opinion – insight into the textual artefact with its content aimed at the thinking, behaviour and acting of the participants: the author, reader and (co)discussants.

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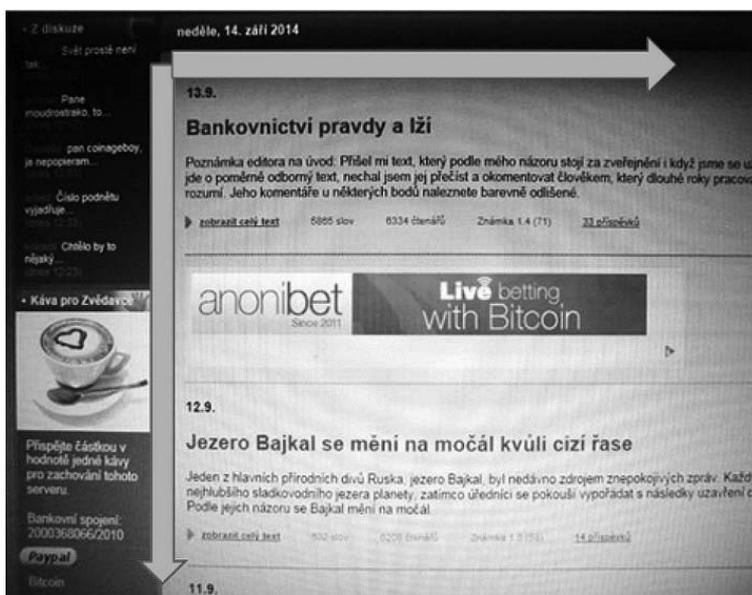
Fig. 8 *Dynamism of reception and perception through a combination of characteristics*
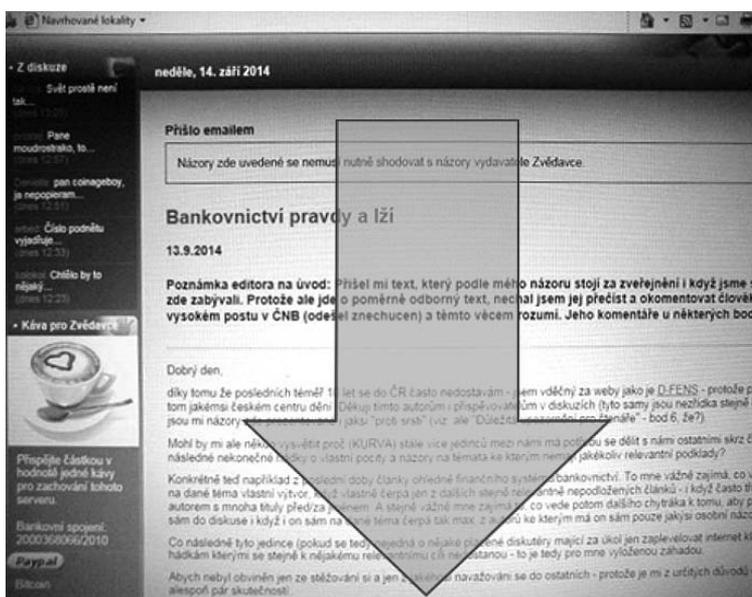
Fig. 9 *Perception of the model by extending peripheral vision*

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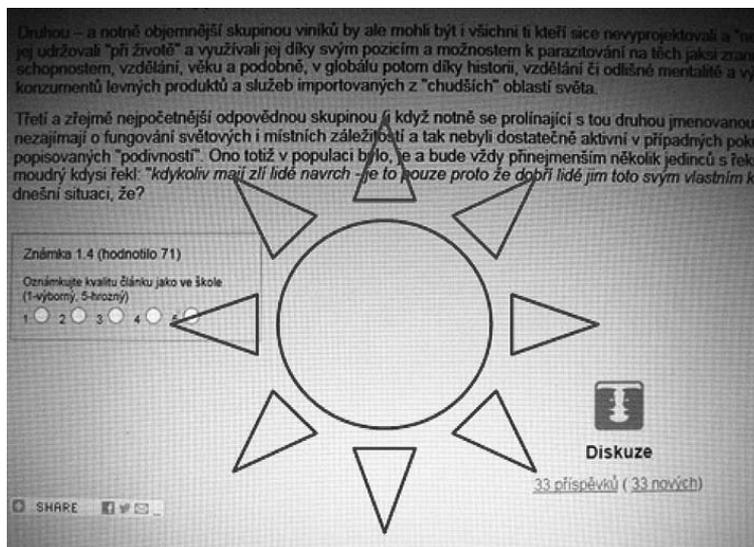
Fig. 10 *Combination of cursory tempo and spatial or linear perception*

If we, in this case, accept the rational assumption about "coining" the information-structural function and persuasion, or influence, by the discussion through strong and weak arguments and commentary sections and procedures, we can definitely expect a significant presence of axiological features, i.e. the portrayal of the deep value-creating characteristics of human communication (Fig. 11). We can consider this synergetic effect as one of the major contributions next to the caution about, or often seen reservation towards, electronically conditioned communication in the media environment. As a supportive argument, there is a well-known point regarding the (virtual) minimization of the communication proximity of internet communication interaction participants in cyberspace. It is in fact identical with the conditions of direct verbal "face-to-face" contact. In addition, this can happen with the significant support of multimodal code systems activated by construction and procedure, which are (even in the media) electronic-space ready for a synergetic and often synesthetic assignment and duties.

In connection with the third subgroup it is necessary to say that this form overcomes the language communication interface and settles between the creators and users of media production as a hybrid, "glocal" manner of representing media messages. Concrete texts and their content support **a)** the unification of the user experience of the internauts regardless of their non-verbal background, **b)** the synchronization of the discussed (from agencies, translated from other languages) media products and electronically conditioned communications of local provenance, and **c)** the effective enabling of the overcoming of the genre limits between the source text and the discussion, with a pragmatic turn from monologue to dialogue.

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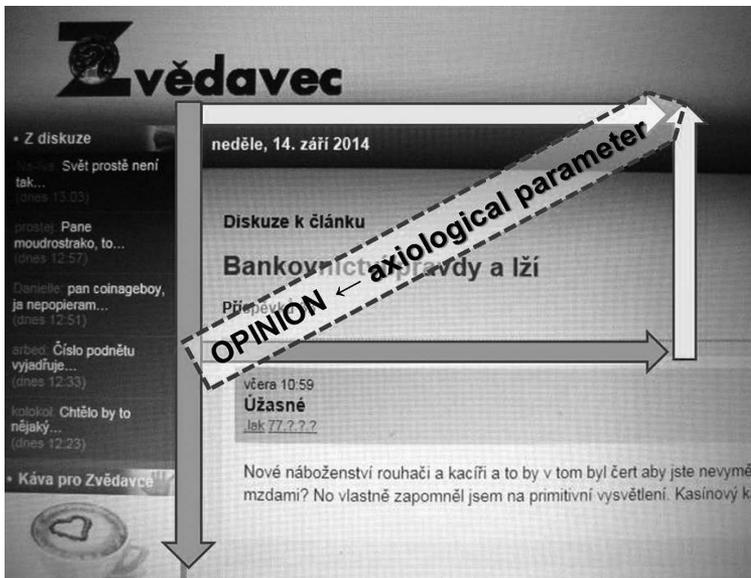
Fig. 11 *Synergetic effect and contribution of an electronically determined media communication*

3. Interpretations, discussion and closing remarks

The selected section of media communication in an electronic environment, after the research inputs and analysis, allows the creation of a few final formulations, but, of course without the claiming that they should be accepted unconditionally. We hierarchically present statements and notes on the axis from general to specific.

3.1. Media communication in an electronically conditioned environment can be seen as a multi-levelled structured process with a major and active participation of internauts. This vision is functional regardless of the finding; within the structuring of the media communication chain its participant can be shown, affected or found. In media cyberspace the primary emphasis is on the creation of a *sui generis* social reality, not on the stream and introduction of facts (events), or assuming an attitude towards them.

3.2. The electronic media communication paradigm has been established with the help of the often conflicting, but mostly focused and convincing influence of information-communication technologies. In the contact and intersection with their predispositions, the cooperation of mostly neighbouring, or similar communication spheres in cyberspace is applied and reviewed. As a result of their favourable coexistence the user's stereotype emerges: the basis of the Microsoft operating system

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is in the technological background of Word, the most used text editor, e-mails, and chatting, which also influences the creation, dispatching, metasearching, receiving and interpreting of communications, belonging to various genres and groups of genres, mostly in the environment of the so-called glocalisation. The following simultaneously applies: the quick perception of a visual communication often offers a dull, even trace, establishment in the recipient's mind.

3.3. Functions in communication, which are/were supposed to be accomplished through current glocalised electronic periodicals, enter the relationships as follows:

a) contact

b) instructional + persuasive

c) informational

d) entertaining + phatic (infotainment) function (the mentioned communication functions defined by Z. Vybíral, Vybíral 2000).

The arrangement and fulfilment are normally shown by the growth of media literacy, mostly the regular users of electronically conditioned media products. But specific research aimed at proving this is necessary.

3.4. The older fact of visual communications being perceived, decoded and interpreted identically in the glocalised era is no longer valid. It is the theme and genre of the media product that is important for the internaut's decisions and behaviour. Their cooperation, as well as tension or conflict, is demonstrated through the activation of particular codes (as understood by R. Barthes, Barthes 1967) in the following way:

a) middle stream (mainstream) and tabloid e-periodicals – the planar perception of the model prevails here, the proairetic (action) code being activated

b) influential, "respectable" media and analytic journalism – the perception and processing of stimuli prevail here, reference and hermeneutic codes being activated

c) interactive periodicals with discussion boards – the linear perception and spatial composition synthesis prevails here, connotation and symbolic codes being activated. The cooperation of perception and codes offer the features and parameters of colloquialization for electronically conditioned communication (for "colloquialization" see Patráš 2013). The revitalisation of language and verbal communication as a significant value system is the result of this cooperation. We can speak of one of the positive impacts of electronic media communication on the audience.

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SAŽETAK
Vladimír Patráš
SOCIOLINGVISTIČKI UVIDI U ODNOS LINEARNOSTI – IZDAVAČKI
MEDIJ – PROSTOR U GLOBALIZIRANOME ELEKTRONIČKOM TISKU

U sferi novina medijski se plan (činjenica, događaj, stav, utjecaj, itd.) tradicionalno za percepciju i procesiranje priprema putem vizualnoga kanala. Medijski proizvod u elektroničkome okružju računa s efektom višekodnih sustava koji su vizualnoga podrijetla. Novinarska komunikacija koja je određena elektronički poštuje i rabi dokazane i ustanovljene jezično-kompozicijske i standardne tipografske obrasce i metode svojega tiskanoga parnjaka. Istovremeno, surađuje s multimedijskim sastavnicama na sociopragmatički učinkovitome sjecištu koristeći njegove varijacije. Posljedično, zbog sinergičnoga bi učinka jezično-komunikacijske dominante elektroničkih časopisa mogle biti restrukturirane. Cilj je ovoga rada prikazati tendencije raslojavanja pojačanih sastavnica kroz prizmu sociolingvistike. Nalazi, tvrdnje i rezultati kontrastivno se raspravljaju u suvremenome elektroničkome tisku koji se objavljuje na slavenskim jezicima (slovački, češki, hrvatski, ruski, bjeloruski, srpski i drugi).

Ključne riječi: *globalizacija; lokalizacija; medijska komunikacija; multimedija; kontrastivna lingvistika; sociolingvistika*