Text categories of messages in the form of a political cartoon

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Abstract. The article deals with the political cartoon as a creolized text consisting of two parts (verbal and visual) and identifies the potential of verbal and visual means to express text categories in messages under study. The author comes to a conclusion that political cartoons are characterized with the same text categories as a homogeneous verbal text. The text categories of a political cartoon are expressed with verbal and visual means organized in personal, local, temporal and modal structures of the message. Analysis of Walter Hanel's cartoons proves the following: (1) the cartoonist expresses his own opinion using constituents of the personal structure; (2) narration perspective of the message causes its emotional tinge and subjective evaluation (the artist uses verbal means, which have certain connotations or develop ones in connection with the picture, and advantages of visual means, constituents of the modal structure); (3) constituents of the local structure function as direct and indirect local references, indicate place of action and create space of a cartoon; (4) using advantages of both codes and appealing to addressee's background knowledge, the cartoonist can specify time actual for the message, introduce traces of the past into the present and look into the future. The author of the article inclines to the opinion that verbal and visual means are equal in their contribution to the message in the form of a political cartoon

1 Introduction

From the point of view of modern linguistics, the political cartoon can be seen as a type of a creolized text, because it is characterized by distinctive features of a creolized text: codes of different semeiotic systems are used in it [1].

In our opinion, the political cartoon differs from the verbal text with illustrations (it also consists of two parts: the verbal and the visual part) where the verbal part plays the leading role. It is a question whether the verbal part plays a leading role in the message in the form of a political cartoon, because it is known that the addressee apprehends visual information faster than verbal information [2], and the verbal part of the message in the form of a political cartoon often consists only of a word, word combination, very short sentence or can be absent at all. As sometimes it is difficult to say which of the both parts plays a leading role in the message, we incline to the opinion that both of them are equal in their contribution to the message.

But according to above mentioned, the message in the form of a political cartoon is a text and it means that the message is characterized with some text categories similar to a homogeneous verbal text. This fact explains why the article deals with text categories in messages in the form of a political cartoon, and why the purpose of the study is to identify the potential of employing verbal and visual means to express text categories in messages in the form of a political cartoon.

2 Materials and methods

The study is based on political cartoons of Walter Hanel, a German cartoonist, whose political cartoons are exhibited to the public on the website www.hdg.de/*haus-der-geschichte/sammlung/ karikatur/* (*Stiftung* **Haus der Geschichte** der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, date of access: 14.04.2019) and can be seen on the website *walter-hanel.com*. He also illustrated the book *Meet United Germany* [3].

The purpose of the study determines methods used in it. Acting on the premise that the message in the form of a political cartoon is a text, we base on L.A. Nozdrina's experience from her study of text categories in a homogeneous verbal text [4]. She studies cooperation of language means which belong to different language levels but take part in formation of one and the same text structure: the personal, local, temporal and modal structure. In this study, detection of verbal and visual constituents of text structures is supplemented with linguistic description and contextual and definitional analysis.

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3 Results and discussions

In the article examples which illustrate the potential of employing verbal and iconic means to express text categories in messages in the form of a political cartoon are divided into groups according to their belonging to a concrete text structure.

3.1. Personal structure of the cartoon

The personal text structure is based on the grammatical category of person and is usually discussed in connection with problems of author's voice in the text, and narration perspective (in the first person singular or in the third person). In a homogeneous verbal text written in German the category of person can be also expressed with personal pronouns, personal forms of verbs, possessive pronouns, imperative forms [4].

The fulfilled study of political cartoons shows that usage of all above-mentioned verbal means occurs in subtitles in the form of direct speech.

As a rule, a subtitle written in the first person expresses an opinion of an average citizen drawn somewhere in the corner of the picture: *"Ich glaub nicht, dass das Ding im Jahre 2000 schon fliegt!"*, 1995 (I find it hard to believe that this thing might be flying by the year 2000!). In this case the cartoonist shares an average citizen's opinion or an average personage on the picture passes the cartoonist's opinion.

The cartoonist expresses his opinion using so-called inclusive pronoun *"wir"* (we) in the verbal part of the cartoon: *"Wir drücken Dir alle den Daumen, Michael"*, 1990 (We all wish you good luck, Michael). Using inclusive pronoun *"wir"* (we) the cartoonist joins the audience, labels his belonging to it, presents the audience and passes its opinion. The same functions are fulfilled by possessive pronoun *"unser"* (our) in the following subtitle in the form of direct speech*: "Mein Gott, - sieht unser OB heute aber wieder blass aus…!"*, 1992 (My God! Today our burgomaster looks pale again).

Usage of a confidential pronoun *"du"* (you) shortens distance between the cartoonist in the role of the addresser of the message and his audience (the addressee): *"Ich sag dir doch, seit die Wojtyla zum Papst gewählt haben, ist alles möglich!"*, 1978 (I tell you that all is possible since they elected Wojtyla the Pope).

In subtitles Imperative and its competitive forms are also possible: *"Vorhang auf!"*, 1989 (Curtain up!). *"Schnell unter Dach und Fach…"*, 1990 (Run away as quickly as possible!). They mark cartoonist's active participation or his reaction to the state of things depicted in the visual part of a political cartoon, although he is behind the scenes, and his voice is a voice-over.

Subtitle in the form of an exclamatory sentence can be considered as cartoonist's emotional reaction to the state of things if an exclamatory sentence has an interjection in its structure therewith. Interjections express emotions [5], e.g. *Hurrah!* (joy, gladness): *"Hurra, der Binnenmarkt ist da!"*, 1993 (Hurrah, the Common Market is here!)

Modal adverbs *"vielleich"* (possibly, perhaps), *"wohl"* (maybe), *"gewiss"* (definitely) etc. indicate that the idea expressed in the subtitle is a result of addresser's reasoning, so they are also constituents of the personal structure of the message: *"Sicherlich wieder das Finanzamt mit seinem ewigen Formalkram!"*, 1985 (It's definitely the finance department with its constant bureaucratic trash again!). *"Warscheinlich gehört dies auch zu den Schiesserschen Sanierungsprogrammen."*, 1986 (Probably, it has to do with Shiesser's sanitation projects).

To our mind, visual images which the cartoonist chooses to express his ideas can also be elements of the personal structure because this choice presents artist's point of view, i.e. the addressee sees the state of things depicted on the cartoon with cartoonist's eyes.

Let us illustrate our idea with an example from the book *"Meet United Germany"*. We see the Federal Chancellor of the German Federal Republic and leaders of German political parties on Walter Hanel's illustration to the chapter *"Political Parties and Democracy"*. They are depicted as cooks standing around a big cooking pot marked with the place name (toponym) *"Germany"*. The belonging of the personages to certain parties is also marked with abbreviations on their aprons and toque blanches: *"SPD"* (the Social Democrats), *"FDP"* (the Free Democratic Party),*"CSU"* (the Christian Social Union),*"Grüne"* (Greens). All personages take part in cooking: they stir the contents of the cooking pot with their ladles.

The heading above Walter Hanel's cartoon *"Political Parties and Democracy"* consists of stylistically neutral words, doesn't have any connotation. But the picture has one, and it is not only funny faces of political leaders.

The picture refers to the German proverb *"Viele Köche verderben den Brei"* [6] (Too many cooks spoil the broth / soup). The German proverb is organized by the finite verb *"verderben"*, its meaning is equivalent to one of the English verb *"spoil"*. Definitional analysis shows that its semantic structure contains negative valuation based on opposition of notions *'good'* ↔ *'bad'* for people [7]: *"spoil" 'to affect something in a way that makes it worse'* [8]. Thus, the visual part of the message emphasizes the negative side of a plurality of political parties in the German Federal Republic, has negative implication.

In connection with the question under discussion, it is necessary to mention little black birds in Walter Hanel's pictures. It seems the artist identifies himself with those birds. So they can be comprehended in the personal structure of his messages in the form of a political cartoon as well as his signature in the corner of the picture as indirect and direct references to the addresser of the message.

3.2 Local structure of the cartoon

Walter Hanel's political cartoons demonstrate four possibilities of a local structure: 1) the cartoonist names or indicates place where an event occurs; 2) he makes obvious hints about the scene of action; 3) the artist creates stage scenery for his personages; 4) there are no hints about the scene of action.

The first of them is represented by names of places, names of public and political organizations or abbreviations of those names [9]. Here are some subtitles which contain direct local references: *"Stuttgart Summit. EC savings"*, 1983; *"Albertville'92"*, 1992; *"Europäische Gemeinschaft – Herzlich willkommen im vereinten Europa!"*, 1985 (European Communities – Welcome to united Europe!), *"Die Grünen im Bundestag, Rotation"*, 1984 (Greens in Bundestag, rotation). Direct local references in the form of a place name or an abbreviation can be found in the picture. In the cartoon under the heading *"Herzlich willkommen"*, 1993 (Welcome) it is the abbreviation *"EG"* (EC – European Communities) on the front wall of the house, the "European House", where some leaders of the member states of the EC are trying to keep the rain out.

The next subtitle comprehends the direct local reference in the form of a paraphrase (a round-about way of description) *"Das Land der Griechen mit der deutschen Seele suchend…"* *„Volk der Dichter und Denker"*, 1978 ("Craving for the state of Greeks with the German soul" "Nation of poets and philosophers").

In the subtitle *"BONN-peji"* (1991) two place names, *Bonn* and *Pompeii*, form a compound word created by Walter Hanel. The first of them refers to the former capital of the German Federal Republic and is a constituent of the local structure of the message as well as monuments with explanations to them in the picture.

Images of state flags, state emblems, elements of national or organization symbols, recognizable monuments, souvenirs typical for a concrete place, personages dressed in national costumes, national dishes in the picture can function as indirect local references, give a hint at the scene of action.

Usage of indirect local references is based on addressee's background knowledge of a subject. In one cartoon by Hanel on how European citizens view Europe (1981), the artist incarnates Europe as the beauty from Greek mythology to represent present-day Europe. The beauty is sitting on the back of a stupid bureaucratic donkey. In the corner of the picture two European citizens discuss the situation. One of them says, "And I always thought that Europe was sitting on a bull!" (*"Und ich dachte immer, Europa würde auf einem Stier sitzen!"*). The figure of the Greek beauty and the proper name *Europa* on her decoration ribbon are indirect local references and constituents of the local structure of the message.

In his cartoon on the Single European Act (18 February 1986) Walter Hanel creates made-up space of a circus show for the beauty from Greek mythology. Sitting on a cow (in connection with EC, a cow embodies its economy) the Greek beauty has just jumped through the ring. But the half of the cow is on this side of the ring, the other one is still on that side. The cow, the beauty from Greek mythology as the personification of Europe, and the shape of the ring in the form of the abbreviation *"EG"* (EC – European Economic Community) are indirect local references to the European Community. Details which refer to a circus show are local references to made-up space of so-called visual metaphor (they have the same functions as metaphors of a natural language [10]). In this example, the visual metaphor is used by the cartoonist to express his emotional reaction to the state of things. Thus, the local structure of this cartoon contains constituents of two types: local references which refer to a real event and ones that create made-up space of a visual metaphor with explanatory function.

There are no local references in the cartoon by Hanel on difficulties encountered by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, President of the French Republic, and German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt in reaching a political agreement with British Prime Minister Margaret Thacher to settle the issue of the United Kingdom's contribution to the Community budget *"Die eiserne Lady"*, 1980 (The iron lady: "No compromises"). This information is possibly not important for the message. The cartoonist creates made-up space of a visual metaphor, which helps him to emphasize negative results of summit talks. He depicts Margaret Thacher in knight's armour consisting of all possible items: a plastron, plate leg and arm shields, an iron skirt and helmet. There is an iron belt with a big padlock around her waist. Broken keys are lying on the floor. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Helmut Schmidt tired and exhausted are going away.

There are no local references in portraits of politicians. The aim of these cartoons is to characterize a politician. For example, in the year 1976 Walter Hanel depicts Helmut Schmidt as Prussian king Friedrich the Great because in Walter Hanel's opinion Helmut Schmidt fully realized power of the State authority and his personal responsibility for his decisions.

Thus, the local structure of a message in the form of a political cartoon includes verbal and iconic means which function as direct and indirect local references and indicate place of action or create space of the cartoon.

3.3 Temporal structure of the cartoon

When speaking of the expression of time in a message in the form of a political cartoon, it is necessary to take into account that the cartoon expresses its creator's emotional reaction, i.e. his momentary reaction to the state of things. This fact presupposes that time of a message concurs with time of its creation: the artist creates in the coordinate system *I – HERE – NOW*.

As a rule, in the corner of a cartoon the year of its creation is marked and the artist can specify time actual for the message with other means. For example, he defines event time with verbal means referring to certain year, season, holiday name: *„Sommertheater '87 wegen des großen Erfolges Spielzeit verlängert."* (Performance of the open-air theatre '87 is prolonged because of great success); *„Fröhliche Weihnachten"*, 2011 (Merry Christmas); *„Frohe Ostern"*, 1990 (Merry Easter); *Herbststürme*, 2011 (Gale-force wind in autumn). In space of the picture the cartoonist gives details associated with the above mentioned notions: *Christmas ← 'Christmas tree', 'New Year's gifts', 'Santa Claus', 'candles', 'three kings bearing gifts'*.

As a matter of fact, cartoons are "present-oriented", but this characteristic does not absolutely exclude other

time dimensions in the cartoon [11]. There are subtitles which refer not only to present time, but also to past and future time. In the following examples verbal forms in predicate positions give present, past and future planes of utterances: (1) „*Hallo Liebling, unsere Kriese ist da!*", 2012 (Hallo, my darling, our economic crisis <u>is</u> here!). The present tense of the German verb *sein* (be) marks the present plane. (2) „*Da war doch noch was…*", 2011 (There was something else –). The past tense of the German verb *sein* (be) marks the past plane. (2) „*Bin gespannt, wie lange sie durchhalten wird*", 2011 (It <u>is</u> interesting how long she <u>will stand firm</u>). The present tense of the German verb sein (be) marks the present plane, and the future tense of the German verb *durchhalten* (stand firm) marks the future plane.

But also lexemes can refer not only to present time (This possibility is demonstrated above), but also to past and future time. For example, radical change in Boris Jelzin to Helmut Kohl relations is expressed with word *Eiszeit* (the Cold War) in the subtitle *"Ein Hauch von Eiszeit"*, 1992 (Breath of the Cold War). This lexeme refers to the state of the Cold War, a state of political hostility between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Warsaw Pact countries after World War II.

The cartoon under heading *"Towards a cleaner Germany"* from the book *"Meet United Germany"* includes prospection which the preposition *towards* refers to and the adjective *clean* defines.

The look into the future is presented in space of the cartoon in another illustration of the book *"Meet United Germany"* which was published in 1991. It is the cartoon under the heading *"Women – where are they?"*. A woman alone among men at the meeting is lost in thought about women's future in united Germany. The addressee of the message in the form of a cartoon sees results of her serious reflection in a cloud above her head under the subtitle *"Power 2000"*: a lot of women and a man among them.

Analysis of Walter Hanel's cartoons proves the variety of time dimensions and equal potential of verbal and visual means to express category of time in messages in the form of a political cartoon.

3.4 Modal structure of the cartoon

The characteristic feature of a political cartoon we have indicated above (notably, its emotional tinge) implies that its modality is a subjective one and covers verbal and visual means which express cartoonist's position to the state of things.

In the subtitle *"Ein Hauch von Eiszeit"*, 1992 (Breath of the Cold War) the word *Eiszeit* (the Cold War) refers to the notion of a very dangerous situation in the history of the world. In the visual part of the cartoon Russia is incarnated as a polar bear, a polar bear is a dangerous animal and awakes fear. In their combination these verbal and visual means form a basis to a certain connotation of the message in which the cartoonist gives negative estimate to Boris Jelzin's position.

Walter Hanel used to incarnate European economics as a cow. On pictures, which deal with European economics, cow's face expresses reaction to results of European leader's talks. In the cartoon *"Euro-Tristesse, 2005"* cow's face is sad. So it expresses negative estimate as well as in the cartoon *"Heraufsparziert…"*, 1999 (Climbing up the stairs –). In this cartoon the cow is looking afraid at new riders from the East who are trying to climb onto its back where there are already a lot of them. In another cartoon *"Gruppenbild mit Rindvieh. EU-Konferenz, Florenz"*, 1996 (Group photograph with a cow. EU-conference, Florence) cow's face is happy, i.e. the cartoonist gives positive estimate results of the EU-conference in Florence.

A large dish penciled in the cartoon *"Spaghetti Milanese / Gipfel in Mailand"*, 1985 (Spaghetti Milanese / Summit Talks in Mailand) is full of spaghetti. EU-leaders are unsuccessful trying to struggle out of spaghetti. The artist is surprised at their helplessness.

In 1978 Walter Hanel published his cartoon "*KSZE Das Ergebnis*", 1978 (CSCE Outcome) on the outcome of the CSCE Summit in Belgrade. A huge elephant penciled in the cartoon embodies wide scope of the conference. There are a lot of huge baskets with food in front of the elephant, and in the other corner of the picture there is a flock of little black birds that are confused with a piece of tiny elephant poo flying towards them.

The word *Rotation* (rotation) used in the subtitle to the cartoon *"Die Grünen im Bundestag, Rotation"*, 1984 (Greens in Bundestag, rotation) is polysemantic in German as well as in English. The word is neutral and has the same meanings in both languages: 1) *'movement in a circle around a fixed point'*; 2) *'the process of replacing one thing with another from the same group in a fixed order'* [8]. In the subtitle of the cartoon the word *Rotation* is used in its second meaning. In space of the picture there is a windmill with sails (long pieces of wood) turning in high speed, i.e. the picture refers to the first meaning of the word *rotation*. Funny figures of party members are clinging onto sails. Thus, in context of the illustration the word *Rotation* (rotation) gets an ironic connotation.

The heading of Walter Hanel's cartoon *"Deutsch-Deutscher Staatszirkus"*, 1990 (German - German state circus) includes a compound word *Staatszirkus* (state circus). Both components in the German compound *Staatszirkus* are free stems, so they can be used as words. The second immediate constituent is polysemantic as a word. Its direct meaning is *'a show with performers such as acrobats… that takes place in a large tent called a big top'* [8]. The situation depicted in Hanel's cartoon corresponds with above-mentioned definition of the word *Zirkus*: German politicians play roles of trapeze artists. The word *Zirkus* has also a figurative (transferred) meaning *'Unruhe, Durcheinander'* [12] (*'noisy or rowdy behavior'*; *'muddle about \ around'*) in informal German. We are of opinion that the cartoonist refers to the last meaning of the word *Zirkus* in the heading of the cartoon and gives negative estimate of German politicians' behavior.

4 Conclusion

Taking into consideration all mentioned above, we arrive at a conclusion that the cartoon has the same text categories as a homogeneous verbal text: the category of person, the category of place, the category of time, the category of modality. They are represented in personal, local, temporal and modal structures of a message in the form of a political cartoon.

In connection with its personal structure, which provides insight into narration perspective, it is necessary to emphasize that the cartoonist expresses his own opinion in messages using the personal pronoun of the first person, an inclusive pronoun *wir* (we), the possessive pronoun *unser* (our), a confidential pronoun *du* (you), and Imperative forms. Moreover, subtitles have often the form of direct speech and contain exclamatory sentences. Modal adverbs used in the subtitles indicate that the idea expressed in the subtitle is a result of addresser's reasoning. Visual images which the cartoonist chooses to express his ideas are also constituents of the personal structure of a message in the form of a political cartoon because this choice presents artist's point of view.

Narration perspective of a political cartoon causes its emotional tinge and subjective evaluation of a cartoon, which are expressed with verbal and visual means of its modal structure. To this effect the artist uses verbal means, which have certain connotations or develop ones in connection with the picture of a cartoon, and advantages of visual means (facial expression and body language of personages).

Political cartoons demonstrate four possibilities of a local structure: 1) the cartoonist names or indicates place where an event occurs; 2) he makes obvious hints about the scene of action; 3) the artist creates stage scenery for his personages; 4) there are no hints about the scene of action. As a rule, verbal means are used as direct local references and visual means can be used as indirect local references. Local references are absent in portraits of politicians and some situations. The aim of the first group of cartoons is to characterize a politician. It is irrelevant information in the second group of cartoons in which addressee's attention is focused on other sides of the situation, for example, on its results.

The cartoonist expresses his momentary reaction to the state of things in his message in the form of a political cartoon. This fact presupposes that time of a message concurs with time of its creation. But the study shows that this fact does not exclude the variety of time dimensions in the message. Using advantages of both codes (verbal and visual) and appealing to addressee's background knowledge, the cartoonist can specify time actual for the message, introduce the traces of the past into the present and look into the future.

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