ABSTRACT

Poberezhnyi D. O. Small stories of Brexit in the English segment of Facebook social network: narrative discursive approach. – Qualification scholarly paper: a manuscript.

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This thesis brings to light narrative and discursive features of small stories of Brexit in the comments to posts of leading Brexit communities in the English segment of Facebook.

A small story is defined as a non-prototypical variety of narrative activity which produces stories shared by Internet users communicating on social networks. Small stories are normally small in length, fragmented, and open-ended.

Small stories on Facebook are a new object-matter of linguistic research. In order to describe them, this thesis offers an innovation in discourse analysis afforded by incorporating analytical tools of narratology. The resulting narrative discursive analysis is underpinned with the methodology of ecologism. The main outcomes of the research contribute to expanding scientific knowledge in the areas of narratology and discourse studies as well as in social media research. This thesis brings to light the specificity of small stories of Brexit in the ecology of Facebook social network: it captures the concept of the small story on social media, systematizes the subgenres of small stories of Brexit on Facebook; brings out the narrative dimensions of small stories under analysis; describes verbal, metagraphemic and visual means used in them in order to produce a certain discursive effect; identifies linguistic and non-linguistic means of stancetaking in small stories of Brexit on Facebook.

The practical import of this research concerns the prospects of using the obtained data in delivering obligatory lecture courses on British Studies, Stylistics, Theoretical Grammar of English, General Linguistics, elective courses on

Discourse Studies, Text Linguistics and Media Linguistics, as well as in the practice of teaching English, and in student and postgraduate research. The findings can be of help to psychologists, sociologists and teachers fostering students' political consciousness.

The relation of Internet discourse to adjacent phenomena of computer discourse, network discourse and digital discourse is revealed. It is shown that Internet discourse is a hyponym to the above terms: from a technological point of view, it can be characterized as an electronically mediated computer online discourse. The genre structure of Internet discourse is shown to consist of hypergenres, genres and subgenres. The hypergenres of Internet discourse include a social network, website, blog, and electronic library. Among the genres of Internet discourse are a professional website, doctor's blog, scientist's blog, charity's website, etc. Its subgenres include such structurally and thematically united genre entities as a post, comment, personal page, status, and chat.

The terms "story" and "narrative" are differentiated from the viewpoint of postclassical narratology in the following way: a story is a discursive event addressing a certain issue; in it, the narrator's virtual discursive personality is constructed; a narrative is a model of a story that captures its characteristic features abstracted by the observer (communicant, researcher, etc.).

A comprehensive analysis of small stories of Brexit is carried out following the methodological procedure developed by the author of this thesis, which combines narrative and discursive analyses. The narrative characteristics of small stories under scrutiny are revealed: they are small in length, characterized by a high speed of creation, which brings them close to the spoken mode of discourse. However, they emerge in the written discourse mode; therefore, they have metagraphemic features. A small story may be instantiated in a single comment or spread over a series of thematically related responses to a particular post. Small stories do not present stages of the event chronologically, and normally, their structure does not contain all the components of the canonical story. A small story

on Facebook depends on the architecture of this service, being an organic element of the ecosystem of Internet discourse.

It is shown that the subgenres of small stories of Brexit are breaking news, projections, and shared stories. Breaking news small stories address the events which take place on the day the post is submitted. Breaking news are context-sensitive as the narrator does not have the opportunity to change the topic of the post or talk about irrelevant facts or events. They are comparatively small in length and open to comment. In them, specific lexical markers are used to indicate that the small story is of the breaking news type. Among the small stories-projections, a distinction is drawn between general and factual projections. In contrast to small stories which belong to the breaking news subgenre, projections are of a broader nature: they deal with government decisions and areas of life important to the majority of British citizens. Shared stories of Brexit are characterized by extensive intertextual connections. Reinforced by the architecture of Facebook, they ensure semantic unity of several small stories in a thread. These may be located at the same level or at different ones. Respectively, a distinction is drawn between internal and external shared stories.

It is demonstrated that small stories of Brexit on Facebook have the following narrative dimensions: hypertellership, tellability, embeddedness, nonlinearity, and hypertextuality. The author of small stories of Brexit on Facebook is collective, thus the category of tellership, which is characteristic of canonical stories, appears as hypertellership in them. This dimension of the small story shapes its ontological status of an element of the modern virtual world. The tellability of a story is related to the interest of the reader. Small stories on Facebook can have a high, moderate or low level of tellability. Embeddedness of a small story is a qualitative narrative dimension; however, it can be measured by the number of likes which indicate approval, laughter, surprise, sadness, anger, or liking. The dimension of nonlinearity of small stories of Brexit has a number of structural features, in particular, absence of stable temporal sequence (arrangement of small stories in the order of their relevance, time of creation, or in chronological

order), closed sequence, multi-linearity, and open-endedness. Nonlinearity can be observed in one comment or a succession of comments in a thread; by this criterion, a distinction is drawn between internal and external nonlinearity. Hypertextuality of small stories of Brexit is mostly multimodal in nature, which is evident, in particular, in Internet memes, allusions, and precedent statements.

It is found out that the means ensuring the discursive impact of small stories of Brexit on Facebook embrace linguistic, metagraphemic and visual means. Linguistic means include lexical (dysphemisms, metaphors), morphological (pronouns, modal verbs) and syntactic means (rhetorical questions, conditional sentences, repetitions). Most widespread are such metagraphemic means as exclamation marks, capitalization and suspension dots, which are used to express dissatisfaction of the narrator or their ironic attitude. Visual means in small stories of Brexit aim mostly at creating an ironic effect, but can also be used to intensify evaluation of political decisions, argumentation and alignment of political considerations. Visual means characteristic of small stories of Brexit are divided into narrative/visual adaptations, precedent images, and visual reiterations.

In small stories on Facebook, the virtual discursive identity of the narrator is constructed, an important component of which is stancetaking. There are three main types of stancetaking in the comments to the posts of Facebook: epistemic, affective, and narrative. They are instantiated by using linguistic, metagraphemic and / or visual means. Epistemic stance deals with the knowledge and experience of the narrator concerning the issue under consideration. It is rendered with the help of modal and evidential markers. Affective stance conveys the feelings, emotions and evaluations of the narrator, their subjective attitude to the issue under discussion, interlocutors or third parties. Narrative stance involves conventional means which indicate that the speaker takes on the role of the narrator. Narrative stancetaking in small stories of Brexit on Facebook implies open-endedness of the story which is being told. Narrative stancetaking also indicates that certain segments of the audience are more ratified and involved in communication on Facebook.