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**LINGUISTIC PERSONALITY:  
EXPANDING THE HORIZONS OF COMMUNICATION**

*SUMMARY.* The article focuses on the functional and structural changes in the language of personality associated with the updating of “verbal” human capabilities. To live “online” forms a special relationship to language structures and put in the position of each writer, “writer”, which leads to the formation of new anthropological “extensions” of a person.

*KEY WORDS.* Linguistic personality, virtual personality, figure, person, character, text, message.

Humanitarian science has discovered a number of “linguistic” demonstrations with human dimension, and I would especially like to reconsider linguistic personality among those demonstrations taking into account new realia. Traditionally, linguists have studied linguistic personalities. Most definitions of the linguistic personality add up to determining such characteristics of a person as stipulate the creation and perception of speech products (texts). A quantity of research devoted to analysis of linguistic personalities has been carried out. Research related to the linguistic personalities of writers was based on their literary works, and those of journalists on their publications and presentations in mass media. Similar works allow us to judge peculiar features of personal characteristics, thus we can speak about a transfer of research from the area of linguistics to the area of anthropology. The text is hereby considered as an exhibition (a presentation, a demonstration) of social and individual characteristics. If we use literary and culturological categories, the text appears as a personalization and “personification”, as a phenomenon of selfhood, and even, using the tools of conceptualism, a “gesture”.

Such an approach fully justifies itself when applied to “social networking sites”, where a modern individual spends a good deal of time and where he/she expresses his/her thoughts and wishes, commits actions and fills his/her life with events with the help of text. Researchers (culture experts, psychologists) propose a category of “virtual personality” (E. Gorny) for the evaluation of the role of “virtual verbal manifestations” in human life. The known linguistic personality is the basis of the virtual personality. It allows the analysis of speech activity. The focus is on the same features of human psychology which identify the character of verbal products — *messages*. In other words, the same mechanisms are involved, though there are some specific features.

If the linguistic personality is distinguished by the researchers on the basis of a certain combination of texts and statements, then it is considered as a spontaneous

process and a “product”. Origination of a proper linguistic personality is not a priority (and, as a rule, not even a minor) creative task of a writer or a journalist. As for the virtual personality, it is created as an “Alter ego” or a carnival mask the person *intends* playing or even living through. “Network communication” is a reason and a way to demonstrate oneself in the first place, moreover, intentionally, in the light which seems advantageous. Addressing the “communication” category in this case is natural, as communication underlies “virtualization” of a personality both as a target and a reason, and lately has developed as a creative genre. The replacement of the categories “text” and “statement” by “message” (*co-communication*) is also symptomatic: a message is addressed to a conversation partner; it calls for communication and the creation of a dialogue situation. A message without a reply is not self-sufficient. It appears that a virtual personality is aimed at creating a community (on the basis of itself as a general interest) more than in any other genre.

A virtual personality taking into account its creative potential may be considered both from the linguistic and the artistic points of view. If, at the same time, we focus on anthropological positions, then it's not the artistic value which is of interest, nor the evaluation of linguistic correctness/incorrectness and not even the “idiolectic” features, but the “verbal and artistic” tools used by a person to personalize, personify, present and sometimes to betray his or herself. “Virtual” media is exactly the space for the identification of a person through a “sign”; it is also the place where events come down to communication. And the latter is no more presented as a goal in itself, but as a way of existence. That is why the presence (and quantity) of “likes” and comments seem so important. They become a “status” indicator of personal significance, referring specifically to a person since social characteristics like a circle of contacts structured by degree of significance and participation, by area of acquaintance and activity and by interests are present.

A virtual personality is always created as a public one. It is demonstrative, often aggressive, active, pushy and ready to reply and to defend. Its presentation takes place in conditions of network publication, and the latter is fully open for response, comments and criticism. Actually, feedback is the true objective of communication. As a result, each text gains “deliberateness” and pathos, thus any network dialogue is under the impact of the aforesaid, even if a dialogue between congenial souls entails “game” transformation of openness, frankness and sincerity. It sounds like a confession, but “with caution”, to the wider public and loss of privacy; a “self-exposition” only of such features which may be of potential interest or which may evoke a response. A confession not aimed at sincerity but at popularity is quite in the spirit of Post-Modernist simulations.

In this context, a text message not only discloses but also hides the real “Ego”. A social network gives the opportunity of a masquerade where one can commit an action (even if in the framework of a semiotic manifestation), where one can speak out and remain unrecognized and where one can set up and “live through” another life with the help of anonymous sayings. But one shouldn't forget that irrespective of all mystification, a virtual personality is just a tool, a way and a stylization, and — to some extent — a form whose content is still a real personality with real plans, thoughts, ambitions and dreams (in the same way as Leo Tolstoy and Gustave Flaubert saw themselves and their inner worlds in Natasha Rostova and

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Emma Bovary respectively). In this connection I would like to quote a blogger-writer publishing his/her comments under the user name of Masha Zvezdetskaya: *"It's an ancient verbarium: a holy face — a face — a false face. A holy face is the highest of a person, existence beyond the human, holiness and aspiration to higher substance. A face is a person as is, a routine life. In the old days in Russia, wandering comic minstrels and actors usually wore false faces. Demons also used to wear masks as a non-human layer of existence and aspiration to the lowest. But altogether a holy face, a face and a false face formed something integrated — A PERSONALITY. Everybody has a face. A personality is a fulfilled person. It refers neither to holiness nor to devilry; it is just a fulfilled person. It refers to what will remain when the person will not physically exist anymore. In books. In paintings. In music. In general mental space. And on the net as well." [1]. Thus the users of social networks happen to be in the "whirl" of unlimited freedom of speech, demonstrating their false faces, completely forgetting about the necessity of being fulfilled as personalities and of showing human faces but not the faces of "animals" or devils.*

*Social networks are the place of "the individual", which can be opposed to "the personal" (as content is opposed to form). Some people just communicate and other people create "fictional" characters by means of communication and fill their fictional life with events (through messages about them), feelings and ideas. The personal outline in the first place is the presented character. We will know whether a character becomes a person (important and significant, directing social thinking and whether its "role" develops from a game to a worthy cause only if communication withstands the test of time. We can consider the film critic "Goblin", the "cat" Plintus, the "blogger" Kate (in the authorship of whom Artemy Lebedev is "suspected"), Masha Zvezdetskaya etc. as fulfilled persons. Dating sites are rich in characters: a Lovelace may turn out to be a charismatic retired lady, and a young girl a tired father with a large family. The playful element of social communication is addictive in itself, and cases of round-the-clock web surfing are quite common. A character presents itself by an improved or an unexpected and most expressive version of itself. It's a game with limits, rules and a scene set in accordance with one's own wishes and imagination.*

"A personality" and a "person" as well as a "figure" are described by M.N. Scherbinin in the article "Figurativeness of sociality: aesthetic and anthropological research" [2] as different sides of social expression. May this difference reveal itself in the speech activity of an individual? More exactly: may we consider a speech figure and a linguistic personality as different anthropological accents?

A figure of speech is an established term standing for "linguistic means leading to increase the expression of a text". But the "trick" of individual and personal speech demonstration is hidden in the fact that both are not evident ("out of sight"). Subsequently, when determining the "figurativeness" of a person's speech, we cannot talk of parameters, scopes and occupied space in the literal sense. A figure turns out to be a method (a structure) of not a mere delivery of a message to an addressee, but also *an infusion* of feelings and ideas. A figure of speech "requires" the formation of an attitude, an involvement and compassion with the information. In this sense, it is natural to distinguish speech figures first of all in poetry, since poetical works

primarily are aimed at “bridging” the feelings of an author with the feelings of a reader. Obviously, speech figures are not uncommon in prose. Getting an emotional state across is important in prose, but a poetical work is a concentration of this spirit. Thus, the figurativeness of speech may be determined as its figurative expression. It’s a combination of impressions, moods, relations and feelings hiding behind a message and influencing by the latter the emotional and psychological state of the reader.

Thus, figures of speech create mood. One may note a certain clearness of conformity with a reasonable degree of distinction in it. As a result, “figurativeness” is often replaced by being a marionette. If a “figure” has sincere feelings, a “marionette” simulates them. If the parallels between the expressing and the expressible are known, then imitation (“simulation”) is possible. The net related “simulacra” and “simulations” of J. Baudrillard could not have come at a better time, since expression takes place without the expressible. The style and the manner of expression are not supported by the feelings. A “figure” in relation to literature (and art in general) is an *agent* of significance who changes the tendencies and specifies new directions of development of the art of declamation. It’s a person who shapes the modern look of literature.

If we refer to linguistic studies of linguistic personalities, we will note frequent reference to famous journalists and politicians. But if we take into account the fact that the studies are carried out on examples of texts of public speeches or published articles, i.e. edited and verified for compliance with the general goals, political position of a publication or a broadcast etc., then the sincerity of the expressed is called into doubt. Bloggers sharing and expressing certain points of view, thereby shaping and demonstrating “public” opinion, gain high political and social popularity. The “effortlessness” of becoming popular forms an illusion of conformity between personal significance and the utilized “verbal” (text) space, and sometimes the pursuit of such significance gives rise to a number of imitations referring to the style, genre, publication format, social and political views. The feedback (comments, “likes”, viewings)—no matter the type—forms a community of readers and their quantity, not “quality”, and creates a “reputation” and adds “weight” to a writer. If a certain social significance is obtained without corresponding emotions and moods, without sincerely experienced convictions, is it relevant to refer such an agent to social figures, taking into account the artistic sense of this word, and can such “expressions” of public opinion shape a new tendency until it remains unclear and disputable?

A “face” of a verbal personality can also be presented as a method of anthropological measurement. “Personification” is a technique widely used in literature, therefore it is considered as a tool of the theorists of literature. In fact, it is the “finding of a face”, be it personification of natural acts or a concrete definition of human qualities in a character. A speech act completes the construction of a character formed by an action. Thus a miser can save and economize, and at the same time he can be “verbally” stingy and economic (or he can be “chary of words”). Moreover there are verbal-based actions—flattery, lie, praise... And it is impossible to “personify” lies or flattery (falsehood or courtliness) without speech. The same is true of cynicism, irony, lambent humour, profundity of thought, or on the contrary, its superficiality, pathos or simplicity and clarity, ceremoniousness or obtrusiveness, etc.

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Personification in net literature, blogs and personal webpages is a kind of a game and even a mystification (if it happens on purpose). Formation of such verbal action is like “trolling” (provocations, violations of network ethics etc.). A critical-minded Internet user always faces the danger of becoming a troll. Attempts to make government officials use Internet often lead to mechanical “personification” of their job titles. Thus we can speak of the formation of new templates for written language which may reveal the boundaries of new “tunnel thinking” in social ideas.

Such transfer of usual aesthetic and artistic categories to a new “area” has led to the fact that a virtual personality turns out to be quite a popular and “promising” literary genre. The young generation, accused of absolute “non-reading”, does read, but not books, young people read blogs and the personal webpages of each other. Life built in accordance with the laws of “art” starts presenting true interest, but not “the world of art” improving the laws of life. Such “trash literature” does not have a logical end, but one can become familiar with it like with a soap opera any day, and make reading it a part of one’s life. A character — a virtual personality — is available for a response, for an intervention and an acquaintance. The more it’s accessible the more it’s interesting, but it does not make it exalt and does not bring it closer to the ideal. However, regular “familiarization” with somebody’s life brings variety to one’s own life.

To sum up, “virtualization” of a personality is more than just a “semiotisation” process. It is also a mystification, a self-comprehension, a self-demonstration, a self-creation and sometimes a self-destruction. It also contains a triad of “a holy face — a face — a masked face”, a personality, a character, a person and a figure. It is a process putting each “user” of social networking sites in the position of a writer or a master of puppets. Thus, a virtual personality occurs to be a specific point of view regarding the world, a creative position and a discovery of a possibility to “replay” one’s life anew, which is done by every person in accordance with his/her own capabilities. If this opportunity is accompanied by a talent, then the road to “real Literature” is uncovered (as it happened for V. Glukhovsky, N. Abgaryan, M. Malyavin, M. Ketro and others). But if “the secret substance of literature” is absent and the writer is “self-declared”, then he will just increase the number of critically minded “pulp-writers”. Though, irrespective of the fact that the Internet is overcrowded with virtual “depersonalized” masks almost fully covering “persons”, it can still serve as a platform for revealing and developing one’s creative potential.

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