

Irena Snikhovska

Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University

irena29@gmail.com

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6775-274X

LANGUAGE PLAY IN MODERN MEDIATEXT

ABSTRACT

The peculiarities of language play in modern English printed and electronic mass media are discussed. Using the examples of word-building ludic innovations, some ways of their formation are considered. It is noted that the use of the above linguistic phenomena permits to reveal and describe the pragmatic and sociocultural factors in communication.

Keywords: language play, lingvocreativity, ludic word-building, mediatext.

The current studies in linguistics embrace a number of research areas, among them the issues of linguistic creativity, cognitive analysis of the creative aspect of speech, and the means of speech influence. Linguocreative thinking, the manifestation of which is the language play, involves the ability of the individual to manipulate the language and create non-standard witty coinages. Language play as a manifestation of the creative type of thinking and self-expression of the individual is based on the use of an associative formal and/or semantic lingual code.

In the process of considering speech activity against the background of internal mental processes, cognitive and communicative perspective particularly emphasizes such a product of these processes as "language play", since the switching to the expressive ludic mode of communication expands the limits of the functioning of the language, refuting the established notions about the algorithm of perception and verbal reflection of reality. It is therefore quite natural that language system admits a significant amount of freedom of manifestation of linguocreativity of *homo loquens*. The lingual activity of an individual can be expressed, in particular, in a conscious violation of the rules (norms, canons) in order to attract attention to various kinds of speech experiments with the sign.

Despite the fact that in the course of the recent decades in a number of branches of linguistics there has been a significant number of studies in the sphere of lingvocreativity¹,

¹ B. Zawada, *Linguistic creativity from a cognitive perspective*, "Southern African Linguistics and

there has not been highlighted an interdisciplinary coverage of the leading linguistic oppositions (system – norm, normative – abnormal, core – periphery) in the light of the language play.

The phenomenon of language play has become the subject of a number of lingophilosophical, logical-semantic, functional-communicative, and linguocognitive (N. Arutyunova, S. Attardo, E. Bern, G. Brone, D. Buttler, D. Chiaro, D. Crystal, R. Giora, T. Gridina, V. Karasik, D. Nilsen, V. Sannikov, J. Sherzer, L. Wittgenstein, O. Zemskaya, etc.)² studies on the empirical data of different languages. As of late, we observe a keen interest in linguistic creativity, and in particular in generation, modeling of the language play and ludic style, ludic discourse, etc.

The intensification of derivational processes in the texts of contemporary English-speaking periodicals has led to the emergence of numerous innovations, in connection with which has emerged a question of their study and description. Ludic innovations are realized by language means of different language levels. Investigating the word-building in the Russian language, S. Ilyasova proposes to call the language play, emerging as a result of the derivation processes, and as a result of which there are numerous innovations, “word-formation play”³. The purpose of the article is to investigate word-formation techniques for creating ludic innovations within the framework of the strategy of language play, as well as to find out their communicative orientation in modern English-speaking periodicals.

Language play is an effective verbal means of linguistic persuasion and manipulation, operating with the methods of combining the linguistic units and the elements of the extralinguistic experience, which regulate their functioning in the ludic associative field, taking into account linguistic and extralinguistic factors. In the study of means of linguistic manipulation, the attention is drawn to the fact that in order to create a new meaning it is expedient to speak of “homomorphic structuring” of units of different levels (linguistic and extra-linguistic), a combination of emotional and cognitive components, which necessitates an integral study of a phonetic, structural, semantic organization of the text⁴.

Applied Language Studies” 2009, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 235–254; R.J. Gerrig, R.W. Gibbs Jr., *Beyond the Lexicon: Creativity in Language Production*, “Metaphor and Symbolic Activity” 2009, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 1–19; A. Langlotz, *Language, creativity, and cognition*, [in:] R.H. Jones (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Creativity*, Routledge, London–New York 2015, pp. 40–41; T. Veale, K. Feysaerts, Ch. Forceville, *Creativity and the Agile Mind: A Multi-Disciplinary Study of a Multi-Faceted Phenomenon*, [in:] *Applications of Cognitive Linguistics*, Vol. 21, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin 2013.

² M. Borkent, B. Dancygier, J. Linnell (eds.), *Language and the Creative Mind*, CSLI Publications, Stanford, CA 2014.

³ S.V. Il'yasova, *Slovoobrazovatel'naya igra kak fenomen yazyka sovremennykh SMI*, RGU, Rostov-na-Donu 2002.

⁴ M. R. Zheltukhina, *Rechevoye vozdeystviye*, Izd. VFMUPK, Volgograd 2003, pp. 68–69.

Studies of language play in morphemics and word formation are mostly conducted in vein with with the cases of manifestation of this phenomenon at the level of lexical units. The expansion of these studies onto the level of morphology and syntax also usually occurs without distinguishing them from the lexical level properly⁵.

At the word-formation level, the language play is realized as a structural transformation of an existing word or words, as the formation of a new word on the basis of two lexemes, and *vice versa*, as the formation of several elements on the basis of one producing base, using such basic methods as:

1) analogy, that is, the formation of a new word by rethinking and re-wording one word according to another. New ludic coinages are built on the basis of certain structural models; the pragmatic effect is created by shifting the meaning of the word-prototype into the inner form of the breed, for example, *wheredunit* (a detective story in which the crime scene has the key importance), on the analogy with the original *whodunit* "a detective story", as well as the derivatives *whatdunit*, *whendunit*, *whydunit*: "In some mystery romances, the wheredunit is as important as the whodunit. The locale, rather than merely serving as a background to the plot, is an essential ingredient that elevates the story out of the ordinary, providing the ambience found nowhere else"⁶; "«The Chaser» is less whodunit than wheredunit, perversely withholding the location of the Young-min's home from everyone but the viewer"⁷.

2) contamination, that is, the formation of a new lexical unit out of two lexemes, e.g. *infoganda* from *information* and *propaganda*: "a fascinating new book, *Why America Fights*, which traces America's involvement in a number of wars. It introduces a new word: newsletter. This is the masquerading of propaganda to go to war as information; Donald Rumsfeld called «perception management»"⁸; *vegangelical* (a vegetarian who intrusively converts others to vegetarianism) from *vegan* and *evangelical*: "«I'm not a vegangelical», she said. «He's an adult and I respect his choices just as he respects mine»"⁹; *pollutician* (a *politician* who lobbies environmentally harmful initiatives) from *pollution* and *politician*: "But for any elephant entertaining this thought, it's my personal feeling that the next wonder of the world will be the discovery of a sincere «pollutician», elephant or donkey"¹⁰;

⁵ O. T. Tymchuk, *Semantyko-stylistychny yavyshe hry sliv v ukrayins'kiy movi*, dissertation abstract, Kyiv 2003, p. 14.

⁶ *San Diego Union-Tribune*, September 19, 2004.

⁷ *Daily Variety*, June 9, 2008.

⁸ *Telegraph Herald*, March 14, 2010.

⁹ *The New York Times*, February 13, 2008.

¹⁰ *Press Journal*, March 19, 2001.

advertorial (editorial aimed at advertising) from *advertising* and *editorial*: "One last note about [travel] guides: Being wary of any that are published as the advertorials"¹¹; *politainer* (a politician who takes part in entertainment shows, especially during an election campaign) from a *politician* and *entertainer*: "Jesse Ventura was a pro wrestler, then a mayor, then a governor. He now wants to be a talk show host. Jerry Springer was a mayor, a television anchor, then a talk show host. And his show has more in common with WWF Smackdown than Meet the Press. Both are famous, populist politicians with a history of outlandish behavior. They are both «politainers»"¹²; "San Francisco has two of the nation's cutting edge political activists running for the mayor"¹³. In our opinion, the examples of suchlike ludic innovations are aimed at enhancing the expressiveness of speech, as well as conveying the irony towards the highlighted matter.

3) interverbal overlay, in which a different consonant word is interchanged with the part of the original usual word, for example: payment solutions *Payoneer* (cf. *pay* and *pioneer*): "Several years ago at Payoneer, the team decided to bring in a new executive to drive growth. Unfortunately, in addition to his expertise, he also brought politics and conflict. (...) The Entrepreneur Insiders network is an online community where the most thoughtful and influential people in America's startup scene contribute answers to timely questions about entrepreneurship and careers. Today's answer to the question "What leadership style should every entrepreneur try to adopt?" is written by Scott Galit, CEO of Payoneer"¹⁴; *crackberry* (excessive use of the BlackBerry handheld computer, painful dependence on an electronic device) from *BlackBerry* and *crack* (drug, cocaine): "The e-mail devices are very addictive, hence the crackberry nickname"¹⁵; "Dennis Kavelman: I'm not sure if you guys use blackberry or have tried it, but it is pretty addictive. Geoff Colvin: Well, it's addictive and on Wall Street they call it crackberry for exactly that reason. Once you try it you cannot live without it, so they say"¹⁶; *Camouflanguage* (euphemistic language) from *camouflage* and *language*: "The fine art of camouflanguage is alive and well in the business world, as evidenced by these excerpts from the Quarterly Review of Doublespeak"¹⁷; *fuzzword* (the word or phrase that is deliberately baffling) from *buzzword* and *fuzz*: "These days, the buzzword – actually it's more like a fuzzword – in urban policy is «empowerment»', a

¹¹ *The Orlando Sentinel*, April 28, 2002.

¹² *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, August 5, 2003.

¹³ *The San Francisco Examiner*, December 10, 1999.

¹⁴ *Fortune*, May 29, 2016.

¹⁵ *The Toronto Star*, May 3, 2004.

¹⁶ *Interview*, CNBC, September 29, 2000.

¹⁷ *Roanoke Times & World News*, March 19, 1998.

concept endorsed by both President Bill Clinton and the new Republican most in Congress"¹⁸; *bacronym* (an acronym worded from the usual word): "The arrival of coeducation at St. Paul's in 1971 inspired the verb to scope (a foreclipping and conversion of the "telescope") and the derived noun scoper. From this process there has been an unofficial organization named SCOPERS, a reverse acronym or bacronym for Students Concentrating on the Palatable Extremities of the Reciprocal Sex"¹⁹.

4) creating rhyming words and reduplication: "David Cameron tells Tory MPs: write a cheque or face sack"²⁰, where in the title of the article the play on words draws attention by rhyming *cheque/sack*, intriguing the reader: "David Cameron tells Tory MPs: write cheque or face sack"²¹; cf: "Caring for Carers? Carers also need to have support whilst they look after the sick"²².

5) graphoderivation, when word-building formants are graphic and spelling means, for example, *me-moir* (memoirs marked by concentration on oneself): "She became the poster girl for all the evils of the book genre my friend Jane calls «me-moirs». Maynard's peers jumped all over her for being everything writers suspect we are and want desperately not to be: self-centered, exploitative, mercenary"²³; "A-maze-ing: Del Toro's surreal Pan"²⁴ about the film *Pan's Labyrinth* (graphic marking of the puns "maze", "labyrinth"), which emphasizes the distinctive features of the subject matter.

6) lexical abbreviations (apocope, syncope, apheresis): *staycation* (and stay-at-home vacation): "Amy and Adam Geurden of Hollandtown, Wis., had a long summer of short, fun getaways with their kids (...) They've scrapped their plans in favor of a «staycation» around the backyard swimming pool"²⁵; "Worn down, feeling deflated as a bad tire? Consider a «staycation», a stay-put vacation where you absorb the budget-minded, healing powers of home sweet home. Do not even think about scheduling home projects during a stacking"²⁶; "How to look ab fab at 50"²⁷, where "ab fab" is an apocopic shortening of both words in the phrase "absolutely fabulous".

¹⁸ *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, September 30, 1995.

¹⁹ R. Lederer, *Adventures of a Verbivore*, 1994.

²⁰ *The Guardian*, May 13, 2009.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Daily Mail*, July 16, 2008.

²³ *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, June 13, 1999.

²⁴ *Newsweek*, March 22, 2007.

²⁵ *Newsweek*, May 26, 2008.

²⁶ *Sacramento Bee*, May 5, 2008.

²⁷ *The Mirror*, May 11, 2009.

7) phonographic abbreviations: "2b or not 2b?"²⁸ – the title of the article on the compressed data presentation as a linguistic feature of the epoch; "Last year, in a newspaper article headed «*I h8 txt msgs*: How texting is wrecking our language», John Humphrys argued that texters are «vandals who are doing our language what the Chinchis Khan did to his neighbors 800 years ago»"²⁹

8) pseudo-motivated abbreviations that have an incongruous sound form due to the unpredictability of their decoding, humorous simulation of official speech abbreviations, etc., for example, WASP – Women's Airforce Service is a motivated homonymous word of flying and stinging wasp; MANIAC – Mechanical and Numerical Integrator and Calculator; what is interesting is the deliberately created pair of CAT and MOUSE, motivated by the "cat" and "mouse" homonyms, in particular, the designated application of CAT (Celestial Atomic Trajectory – nuclear missile) so as to destroy the MOUSE (Minimum Orbital Unmanned Satellite Earth) artificial earth satellite without a crew with a minimum orbit); GEORGE – Georgetown Environmentalists Organized against Rats, Garbage and Emissions; HENRY (High-Earner, Still Not Rich) – High Earner, Not Rich Yet: "«All these luxury brands are extremely vulnerable», (...) a cohort Danziger said has been dubbed « HENRYs: High Earners, Not Rich Yet»"³⁰; "«I'm a HENRY», Mr. Konstantinidis added, «High Earner but Not Rich Yet»"³¹; wombat (something uninteresting and unnecessary) – Waste of Money, Brains and Time: "I bailed out from the chat room because they were wrestling with Netscape versus Internet Explorer wombat".

So, the research on the language play within the word-formation perspective allows to state that at the turn of the 20th–21st centuries the formation of ludic innovations is characterized by high productivity and polyfunctionality. In the production of new expressive units of mass-media discourse, the role of word-building play is quite significant. The perspective of the research is the further exploration of new developments in the semantic-pragmatic aspect, taking into account linguocultural and sociolinguistic factors.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Borkent M., Dancygier B., Linnell J. (eds.), *Language and the Creative Mind*, CSLI Publications, Stanford, CA 2014.

Crystal D., *Language Play*, Penguin, London 1998.

Daily Mail, July 16, 2008.

²⁸ *The Guardian*, July 5, 2008.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *The Record*, November 21, 2008.

³¹ *The New York Times*, January 31, 2009.

Daily Variety, June 9, 2008.

Fortune, May 29, 2016.

Gerrig R.J., Gibbs Jr. R.W., *Beyond the Lexicon: Creativity in Language Production*, “Metaphor and Symbolic Activity” 2009, vol. 3, no. 3.

Il'yasova S.V., *Slovoobrazovatel'naya igra kak fenomen yazyka sovremennykh SMI*, RGU, Rostov-na-Donu 2002.

Interview, CNBC, September 29, 2000.

Langlotz A., *Language, creativity, and cognition*, [in:] R.H. Jones (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Creativity*, Routledge, London–New York 2015.

Lederer, R. *Adventures of a Verbivore*, 1994.

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, June 13, 1999.

Newsweek, March 22, 2007.

Newsweek, May 26, 2008

Press Journal, March 19, 2001.

Roanoke Times & World News, March 19, 1998.

Sacramento Bee, May 5, 2008.

San Diego Union-Tribune, September 19, 2004.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, September 30, 1995.

Telegraph Herald, March 14, 2010.

The Cincinnati Enquirer, August 5, 2003.

The Guardian, July 5, 2008.

The Guardian, May 13, 2009.

The Mirror, May 11, 2009

The New York Times, February 13, 2008.

The New York Times, January 31, 2009.

The Orlando Sentinel, April 28, 2002.

The Record, November 21, 2008.

The San Francisco Examiner, December 10, 1999.

The Toronto Star, May 3, 2004.

Tymchuk O.T., *Semantyko-stylistychnye yavlyshche hry sliv v ukrayins'kyi movi*, dissertation abstract, Kyiv 2003.

Veale T., Feyaerts K., Forceville Ch., *Creativity and the Agile Mind: A Multi-Disciplinary Study of a Multi-Faceted Phenomenon*, [in:] *Applications of Cognitive Linguistics*, vol. 21, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin 2013.

Zawada B., *Linguistic creativity from a cognitive perspective*, “Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies” 2009, vol. 24, no. 2.

Zheltukhina M.R., *Rechevoye vozdeystviye*, Izd. VFMUPK, Volgograd 2003.