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Communication in Audiovisual Culture as a Separate Sign System

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Abstract

The relevance of the topic is that the development of the type of communication – sign and signal system, including based on the sensory characteristics of man as a whole organism – is an issue, at first glance, quite simple and obvious. But with the development of science, the rapid movement of scientific and technological progress, the emergence of theater, television– it turns out that the issue, in fact, is not fully disclosed, because it has its roots much deeper than it seems at first glance. The aim of the article is the direct cause-and-effect relationships between sign systems and communication in audiovisual culture. Methods such as analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, abstraction, concretisation and structuring of the obtained data were used. The article identifies one of the approaches to understanding communication in audiovisual culture. The specific features of modern media space are studied, its key characteristics are described. The problematic approach to the interpretation of communication as a separate plane for human interaction is pointed out. The issue of semiotic analysis of media space at three levels is studied. It was found that semiotic analysis allows identifying in more detail the way of organising, structuring the story and how the content is transmitted through the general architecture of the text. The problems of behavioural analysis of the framing effect are identified. It is established that the paralinguistic system acquires special significance as a method of media coding. It is confirmed that each film is the embodiment of a universal form of history.

Keywords: cinema, media culture, coding, frame, sign system, formula, script, hypertextuality, interactivity

1. Introduction

The emergence and development of screen culture is one of the main phenomena of the twentieth century, which has significantly influenced socio-cultural processes in almost all regions of the world. Invention and spread of cinematography, then television, consumer video equipment, personal computers, the Internet, experience in the development of artistic possibilities of color music, various types of sound and image representations transmitted by the latest technology, the introduction of new technologies in all spheres of culture and life, to the nascent virtual reality, which has already taken over the leisure sector – all this, despite belonging to different fields of knowledge and fields of specialists, are varieties of a single whole – screen culture (Kim et al., 2022). No wonder some researchers believe that, audiovisual communication has seriously supplanted the printed word, and screen forms of creativity are gradually displacing traditional arts or becoming new means of reproduction. Interacting with complex and contradictory social processes, the screen played a crucial role in the democratisation of culture, in the emergence of new forms (Lavrov et al., 2019; Vakhshtayn, 2011; 2013; Hoffman, 2004). As a result, the socio-cultural situation in general, especially in industrialised countries, has changed, the functions of education, science, art and aesthetic education have changed. The development of audiovisual communication and screen art is a difficult issue, as it involves both economic and technical factors (development of new information technologies), social, cultural and artistic factors, which, being closely intertwined, sometimes have unpredictable consequences (Korbozerova, 2021; Nurgali et al., 2021).

In general, the process of development of the media system affects the fact that verbal exchange of information takes a combined (compositional) form by testing character configurations such as a system of symbols, videos, mathematical signs, verbal texts (McKee, 2012; Auanasova et al., 2019). In other words, the construction of a dialogue or monologue in the context of individual media scenes takes the form of a holistic construct formed in accordance with certain laws. Less and less screenwriters resort to spontaneity, even manifestations of impulsiveness in the frame – is the result of long deliberations. That is, in this case, this refers to communication as a certain construct based on laws, relationships, patterns – elements inherent in mathematical science. Some scientists V.S. Vakhshtayn (2011; 2013), O. Moskalenko, M. Matvienko, S. Rubinkivska (2020) to some extent found confirmation of logical and mathematical connections in

communicative competencies, but did not develop this thesis to the level of scientific formation. In this context, this refers to both the temporality and the virtues of the characters, because the media space does not set boundaries for the mathematical justification of correspondences in the media text.

The study was based on a systematic analysis, through which the author could study the problem from different angles. The problem of this study was to find sub-approaches to understanding communication in audiovisual culture. To solve this problem, methods such as analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, abstraction, concretisation and structuring of the obtained data were used. Analysis and synthesis were used in the complex to study information to obtain a comprehensive knowledge of reality. Thus, the features of modern media space, its characteristics were studied, and the issue of communication as a special area for human interaction. With the help of methodical induction and deduction it was possible to draw certain logical conclusions and draw conclusions based on information obtained through the methods of analysis and synthesis. Thanks to the methods of extraction and concretisation, the specific features of communication in the audiovisual culture and different types of content were identified, which are peculiar only to texts in the media space. The structuring method helped to present the results of the research correctly, accessible and clearly. The material basis of the study was the work of many scientists who have previously studied this problem. The work of G. Bateson, E. Hoffman, V.S. Vakhshtayn, R. McKee (2011, 2013, 2004; 2012) was analysed, who traced the direct connection between the established mathematical laws and the structure of communication, the selection of characters. Thus, the aim of study is to determine the direct cause-and-effect relationships between sign systems and communication in audiovisual culture.

2. Characteristics of the Audiovisual level as a Synthesis of Various Specific Forms

The communicative possibilities of the level of audiovisual information range from the use of specific means of language orientation to means of out-of-language order. Since the media perform primarily social functions, their dynamics and structure are a kind of basic factors that depend on the purpose, place and time of communication. For example, information and entertainment functions provide informal or formal incentives at the audiovisual level for both the audience and the presenter. The educational format of communicative influence involves strengthening the cultural function of audiovisual stimulation. Entities of this level can be both ordinary consumers of information and the state, owners of information channels, producers of film and Internet products and more. They are responsible for the reliability and quality of the information provided, which meets certain needs and these shape the needs. According to clear parameters, this level of communication largely reflects the mass consciousness of society, its spiritual values, ideas, ideas, evaluations, etc. Information and technical capabilities of modern society contribute to the emergence and implementation of new information channels in the daily life of the individual, which contributes to the dynamic development of various forms of communication and significantly increases the role of the media. As a result of these processes there are changes in the information and communication space regarding the individual and social consciousness of the individual and society as a whole (Koshekov et al., 2021).

The audiovisual level of information transmission is a unique sign system that communicates through acoustic and visual influences on the recipient. Audio-visual means of communication include television, cinema, computer technology and information transmission. Audiovisual communication works in the process of communicative activity. The peculiarity of the language of audiovisual communication is the use of specific signs – codes of the surrounding reality, which perform certain functions, inseparable from the foundations of socio-cultural background of society. A code is a simulated structure that serves as a basic rule in the development of a set of specific messages, which by their nature acquire the ability to transmit. All codes can be compared with each other more easily and comprehensively based on a common code. Audiovisual communication code has a huge information potential, so the creation of specific messages must meet the clear goals and objectives of the communication process. Since the message as a whole is characterised by an ordered sequence of characters, the code as a structure contributes to the fact that the message can be reported and successfully decrypted by the recipient under certain conditions (White, 2004)

Any message can be presented in the form of audiovisual signs or equivalent, as the semiotic nature of audiovisual representations together with technological capabilities of information transmission provide virtually unlimited information capabilities, speed of transmission, reproduction and the ability to adequately perceive information, the flow of information by the individual. Therefore, the possibilities of audiovisual communication in social terms are mass, accessible, and have certain socio-cultural functions, as they are the main means of mass communication (television, Internet, etc.). Audiovisual communication has a specific, consciously structured code, consisting of two semantic sublevels – denotative and connotative. The denotative sub-level is the initial (fundamental) semantic sub-level, which has a direct semantic reflection of reality, while the connotative sub-level is dominated by signs, symbols, indices, which are contextual and situational semantic reflection of reality. However, in order for the recipient to decipher the information code of what is shown, for example, on a television screen, he must transform the information code presented by signs, symbols or indexes through the connotative component of the context to identify figurative and semantic components of the information code.

It is generally accepted and practically confirmed that the essence of audiovisual communication is a combination of verbal, nonverbal, synesthetic (imaginary) audio in the form of messages that are transmitted in the form of texts, artificial and natural forms of speech, contours, lines, volume, texture, silhouettes and other components that are susceptible to visual perception. This kind of communication can be realised both in autonomous and synthesised form (Nass et al., 2021). Accordingly, globalisation processes and the development of communication technologies have indirectly affected, and in some respects even become the direct cause of the information explosion. It is logical that under such conditions the media space will accumulate many images, signs, systems, definitions. This plane is characterised by individual, previously unknown to mankind features such as hypertextuality, transmedia, interactivity, multimedia. The possibility of remote presentation is another equally important indicator that provides the effect of the presence of visual (or only audio) media product. This led to the appearance of the next feature – a high degree of adaptability, because state-of-the-art media texts can be displayed in various forms and variations. For example, it is not difficult for a gadget user to change the interface, the font of the text in which the information is presented, to make the sound quieter or louder, to adjust the brightness and saturation of the screen, and so on. In turn, at the level of the household user, there is a simplified perception of communicative and multimedia space, as even periods of the history of communication "pre-electronic" media are considered those in which the most developed audio and visual type of communication. However, a comparative analysis of communicative and semiotic strategies of different ethnocultures, civilizations, especially in terms of aesthetic tastes, scientific knowledge, body culture, etc. identifies the original ways of information interaction of the maximum range of human sensory capabilities (Koshekov et al., 2021).

3. Semiotic Analysis of Media Culture as a Complex Phenomenon

In fact, the use of semiotic analysis in the study of media culture as a complex phenomenon provides ample opportunities at least from the standpoint of identifying latent, instructive content that occurs by decoding. The most common methodological approaches are semiotic analysis of media text at one of three levels: as a combination of signs and ways to combine them; method of content translation, where the key subject is the interpretation of signs and messages; pragmatics, which is closely related to the study of the relationship between sign systems and those who use and interpret the messages contained in them. Semiotic analysis allows determining the way in which the narrative is organised and structured, and the way in which the content is transmitted through the general architecture of the text. Thus, one of the most important units of semiotic analysis are codes. The relationship between the signifier and the one being signified is somewhat arbitrary, but can be changed at the request of the author (Korbozerova, 2021). In this system, the sign establishes denotative meanings, and connotative meanings depend on secondary codes and lexicons. Notably, the connotative meanings depend on the socio-cultural context, which complicates their interpretation. Accordingly, the code is a model that largely establishes the rules of development of messages and relationships, and at the same time, ensures their transmission. Developing this thesis, L. White (2004) noted that people's attraction to symbolism is a natural sign of cultural development.

Among the species palette of signs (iconic, natural, functional), special attention is drawn to conventional signs. They are created artificially, are the result of the assignment of a certain value, indicate, figuratively speaking, "the subject of the agreement." For media culture, their role is still invaluable, as signs function as a tool for coding-decoding meanings. We are talking about figurative means, themes, format, frame (within television). Sociologist V.S. Vakhshtayn (2011; 2013) approached this issue closely, who developed the theory of frames G. Bateson. In a broad sense, frames are a structure of the situation, a rigid framework of human interaction, which provides for the admissibility of certain statements, patterns of behaviour. Initially, the basis for the theory was the study of animal behaviour (in particular, otters). The scientist notes that the structure of "communication" situations in the animal world is single-layered, they are devoid of hidden abstractions such as irony, metaphor, there is no what will later be called "transposition". But having begun more thorough research, G. Bateson comes to the conclusion that their own thoughts are wrong, because he notices that animals enter the game – a way of interaction, transferred to an adjacent octave, a different coordinate system. Yes, they enter into a conflict that manifests itself in the fight. At the same time, both parties understand their actions well, because in this way they inform each other that they are ready to harm the opponent. Starting direct interaction, they send a conditional message, resulting in a "frame readjustment". G. Bateson concludes that the main feature of human life is the ability to multiply contextual interactions.

E. Hoffman (2004) developed the idea of his predecessor. He begins to study everyday interactions and tells how such transference) occur. From this it can be learned that the same war is, in fact, a framed interaction of certain players (army). Accordingly, if look at military action on the part of training, it can be noted that significant (from the standpoint) characteristics will be reproduced, but less important will be blank shells, models of grenades and mines, the fact that no one will be killed. In such conditions, it is more interesting for soldiers to gain theoretical knowledge or pose for the cameras; they will not activate the instinct of self-preservation, accordingly, they will not set a goal to save their own lives. A similar example can be seen in the film "Dreams Come True", where one frame broadcasts Paul Potts' visualised

dreams of an opera career, and the frame is already modified when he realises his wish. The same can be traced in the films "Eurovision", "Knockin' On Heaven's Door", "Minamata". One of the main tasks of frame analyst is to find rules according to which one event is transformed into another, which is why in the field of view of this theoretical perspective is not only the difference of contexts, but also their transformation. Frame theory is gradually becoming the basis of new segments of research. For example, frames of interaction with television are the subject of research by specialists in the media sphere. In the XXI centurym it is not so much important to analyse the statistics of viewing a particular channel, as important to identify the degree of involvement, the structure of interaction with the communicative object. In fact, in the case of two or more people, and the exchange of information at the level of "man-object", finds its manifestation and the theory of frames, which helps to understand the structure of everyday communication and laws of transposition of frames. Accordingly, thanks to the theory of frames E. Hoffman (2004), it can be visualized depict the model of communication in the form of a mathematical formula:

frame = Observer's position + structure of the situation where the observer's position = (non-

mediation fabrication)x v(Observer's interpretation) + (Involvement fabrication)z(v) (observer involvement) (1)

where: the lower index "x" indicates the type of fabrication of non-mediation; the upper index "y" its degree. The degree of fabrication of involvement "z" depends on the degree of fabrication of non-mediation "y": if a person notices mediation, then he is not involved enough, and he needs to portray involvement. All this can be written in mathematical form:

$$F = obs + sit, obs = fabr (int) + fabr z (y) (inv)$$
(2)

It is significant that the theory of frames is used in advertising, thanks to which marketers have a direct impact on the viewer. It modulates familiar, stereotypical situations, is designed to identify a situation stored in memory with the reproduction of a particular situational pattern. However, the method of applying frames is not without its drawbacks. Yes, the stability of the frames does not allow to significantly change the advertising strategy, because it will affect brand awareness. In addition, differences in the socio-cultural, political, historical experience of the audience for which the advertisement is broadcast, cause additional costs to study the demand and preferences of the latter. Identical content is not at all typical of cinema, especially when it comes to movies, not TV series. Examples of linguistic frames in commercials are examples of advertising: Kinder Surprise TM (trademark) "Kinder": "Always gives joy!"; TM "Torchin" seasoning: "Inspires delicious"; TM "Lasunka" ice cream: "Producer of happiness No. 1 in Ukraine!"; Sandora juice: "The benefits and taste of whole fruits in each glass" (Moskalenko et al., 2020).

Contemporary screenwriters continue to develop these and other provisions. R. McKee (2012) points to the existence of a certain formula and form of so-called "successful films", practiced for centuries and well known in Hollywood. For example, he cites works that are completely opposite in genre and content ("Persona", "Wheel of Fortune", "Casablanca", "Hannah and Her Sisters", "Terminator"), but notes that these are wonderful screened stories, not at all similar, but have the same effect: the audience leaves the cinema, shouting: "What an interesting story!". This is indicated by R. McKee (2012), that each film is the embodiment of a universal form of history, which is transferred to the screen in a unique way, but the main form remains the same - it is to which the audience reacts with such enthusiasm. He believes that elements in drama should move from "plus" to "minus" and vice versa. Under the elements of drama, as a rule, understand the key characters of the film, previously endowed with certain positive or negative qualities, virtues.

In culturology, as noted by S.-C. Kim et al. (2022), culture can be understood by dividing it into parts, in other words, reality is interpreted using a dual approach (objective and value). Thus, culture and morality contain the following dual oppositions: "good-evil", "useful-harmful", "truth-wrong". The presence of these oppositions is a set and, at the same time, the opposite of knowledge and ignorance of the subject, its relationship to reality. Each pole of the binary opposition is in the focus of culture, where the main task is to meaningfully differentiate between each subject (as a positive or negative component). Notably, not all binary oppositions are divided into positive and negative components, as they can be in both conflict and integration relations. Nurgali et al. (2021) in the discourse of conflict (discourse of power and dissent) separates the components with a "plus" and a "minus". Regarding the discourse of integration (for example, party discourse), it indicates the unity of values, where the labeling of oppositions becomes irrelevant. From the standpoint of R. McKee (2012), "history should not return to actions of small scale or quality, it is necessary to gradually move forward, to the final action, after which viewers will not have to guess anything". That is, in this case, it can be assumed the existence of a kind of cinematic code. At the same time, it is not an amorphous concept, and the process of interaction of subjects has a mathematical justification, based on the laws proven by the exact sciences. The American semiotician J. Fix also speaks about the media as a codified system. He identified three types of code at the television level. The first typological block is "reality", represented by behavior, appearance, clothing, encoded electronically using technical codes. For example, in Hollywood cinema, a white hat once meant a good cowboy, but over time, this tradition has exhausted itself. The plasticity of codes, especially in art, is associated with the author's method of language use, ie conditioned upon the creation of their own language with its own rules for encoding messages (Sapazhanov et al., 2021).

The second block is "ideology", which is organised into a coherent socially acceptable development at the expense of ideological codes, such as individualism, materialism, class, race, etc. The third block is a camera, lighting, music, "presentation", broadcast of the presented codes. The latter, for example, form an idea of a particular conflict, action, character, dialogue (Korbozerova, 2021). If take as a basis the last two positions, then the example of the heroes of the film can show how mathematical laws are implemented. Let's remember the Oscar-winning film "Bonnie and Clyde" (1967) directed by A. Penn. In the center of the plot – two heroes-thieves who commit theft and robbery. They are ambitious and ruthless towards their victims – employees of banking institutions, shops, gas stations. Accordingly, based on these characteristics, both characters are represented by the sign "—". However, the overall effect of the picture is a positive "+", moreover, the viewer cares about the characters, sympathises with them. In fact, it can be talked about a classic example of the implementation of the mathematical rule "minus for minus gives a plus":

$$-(-a) = +a \tag{3}$$

The intensifier of this "plus" is the basing of the plot on real history, the ingenuity of the characters, interest in the historical situation (the period of the Great Depression), in which events unfolded. A similar picture can be traced in "Inglourious Basterds" K. Tarantino, where Shosanna Dreyfus (E. Mimier) and his comrades resort to mass murder, but the director presents it as a way to establish justice, a blow to the fascist government. Because of this, each member of the gang first acts under the sign "-", but then together becomes a story with the sign "+". There are many cases where in the story line one of the characters is presented as positive, the other – negative. In this case, it can be talked about the application of a mathematical formula, where "minus on plus gives minus":

$$-x + y = -xy \tag{4}$$

Most Ukrainian TV series and world dramas are based on this formula. For example, in G. Tornatore's Italian movie "The Best Offer", the client's restorer Claire Ibetson and antique collection owner Virgel Oldman initially act as neutral characters and gradually move into the realm of the positive. Claire Ibetson even evokes an emotion of sympathy in the viewer. The cardinal change of roles takes place in the finale, where it turns out that Claire Ibetson is a swindler, that is, a negative hero. Characteristically, the writers put an end to the "and" not through dialogue, but through the image of despair of the protagonist from the actions of his beloved woman. Broadcasting the change in the viewer's attitude to key characters is the result of applying a special effect of scaling, a sharp slowdown in the dynamics of the picture and reduce noise, conditioned upon which the thorough content of the work is preserved. The fall of the picture conveys the feeling of desolation of the hero, and with it comes an understanding of who the heroine of the work really is. Hence the overall effect of the film "—". A similar pattern is characteristic of "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2", "Silence of the Lambs"; films based on anti-utopian and biographical works. Such analogies can be given at the level of dialogues and polylogues. P. Weir's satirical film "The Truman Show" (1998) accumulates a significant number of scenes that visually reproduce the last of the above formulas, including the fact that only one subject is a positive character throughout the film: -

- "I want to be a great traveler like Magellan".
- "You are late. Everything is already open".

Undoubtedly, the main code carriers in cinema are the image of the hero, landscape, scenery, music, gestures. While watching The Truman Show, the density of the characters changes, the most intense part of the film is the beginning, characterised by "intensive explanatory function", the last frame is also often full of characters. Thus, it can be concluded that the development of images and scenes where the characters enter into communication in the cinema, are not chaotic. Each scene is characterised by a certain form and formula of a mathematical sample, which is consciously or subconsciously laid down by the director and screenwriter, long before the shooting of the film (or series). But the process of decoding is a rather complex mechanism, because the recipient of the message is the viewer, and his ability to interpret film characters is directly proportional to the level of his general culture, education and belonging to a particular social group. It can be assumed that the codes gradually follow the evolution of the viewer: some go out of fashion, others gain new meaning. This state of affairs reflects "the diversity of society and the variability of the processes of social interaction." Author sees the prospect of further research in the in-depth study of the methodology of semiotics in Ukrainian cinema.

4. Conclusions

Technical protocols, media, socio-technical contexts and digital spaces in which communication takes place today are characterised by a combination of structured and structured dynamics that motivate the production and consumption of multimedia and multimodal content. Analysing media culture and media text, we are increasingly witnessing the existence of hidden content, sacralisation and mythologisation of reality. The semiotics helps to identify the true meaning of the director's vision, which actualises the problems of the latest media, explores the deep, hidden meanings of media messages,

allows decoding seemingly invisible mechanisms of influence, structuring socio-cultural reality.

Audiovisual level of information transmission is a special unambiguous sign system that communicates through acoustic and visual impact on the receiver and has its own consciously structured specific code, consists of two semantic sublevels – denotative and connotative: denotative sublevel – initial (basic) semantic semantic sublevel reflection of reality; connotative sublevel includes the interaction of signs, symbols, indices, which are contextual-situational semantic reflection of reality. The audiovisual level of communication and information channels contains a set of means of expression and communication codes that allow to maintain constant contact with society. The effectiveness of communication within the communication and information channels depends on the goals and objectives of the impact on the recipient, as well as the compliance of the content and form of communication to the information needs of man.

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