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**ABSURD AS A MEANS OF TEXT GENERATION:  
 GOGOL – BULGAKOV – MODERN MEDIA<sup>1</sup>**

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*Abstract.* The article is devoted to absurd as a means of text formation in the works of N. V. Gogol and M. A. Bulgakov. Absurd is interpreted by the author of the article from the content-formal positions: both as the absence of meaning (absurdity, nonsense), and as a form of transformation of meaning determined by the author's goal setting (carnivalization of utterance). The article attempts to identify representations of absurd in the fiction of Gogol and Bulgakov based on the theoretical model of the genre created by N. L. Leiderman. In the prose of Gogol, absurd is a necessary component of human existence, its system-forming feature. Absurd is represented at the level of content (the use of absurd plot moves and situations), at the level of expression (the transfer of absurd through the subject and speech organization of the text) and at the level of perception. The specificity of speech organization of the text in the prose of Gogol can be attributed to: introduction of words into the context, intentional violations of lexical compatibility, special construction of complex sentences, combination of the meanings of "affirmation – negation" in one sentence, mixing of stylistic systems, the use of means of linguistic reflection, artistic details and other expressive means of language and speech. In its turn, the specificity of Bulgakov's prose presupposes a semi-fantastic and fantastic embodiment of reality. To intertwine reality and fiction Bulgakov actively uses the potential of the text chronotope, lexemes denoting deviation from the norm ("strange", "insane", "ridiculous", "inexplicable", etc.) and a number of devices expressing the author's attitude to what is being discussed. The author of this article associates the prospects for the study of absurd with the journalistic format of discourse. These prospects may include the identification of the informational nature of absurd (the initial lack of meaning or its transformation); the definition of the genre form of absurd statements; the characteristic of the functions of absurd and its speech representations (coding tools); the development of a series of techniques and a comprehensive methodology for decoding the absurd, as well as establishing its role and place in the paradigm of journalistic discourse.

*Keywords:* absurd; fiction texts; literary discourse; Russian writers; literary genres; genre models; speech organization of the text; subject organization of the text; N. V. Gogol; M. A. Bulgakov; media texts

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**АБСУРД КАК СРЕДСТВО ТЕКСТООБРАЗОВАНИЯ:  
 ГОГОЛЬ – БУЛГАКОВ – СОВРЕМЕННЫЕ СМИ**

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*Аннотация.* Статья посвящена абсурду как средству текстообразования в произведениях Н. В. Гоголя и М. А. Булгакова. Абсурд интерпретируется автором статьи с содержательно-формальных позиций: и как отсутствие смысла (нелепость, бессмыслица), и как форма трансформации смысла, детерминированная авторской целеустановкой (карнавализация высказывания). В статье сделана попытка выявить репрезентации абсурда в художественной прозе Н. Гоголя и М. Булгакова с опорой на теоретическую модель жанра, созданную Н. Л. Лейдерманом. В прозе Н. Гоголя абсурд является необходимой составляющей человеческого бытия, его системообразующим признаком. Абсурд репрезентирован на уровне плана содержания (использование абсурдных сюжетных ходов и ситуаций); плана выражения (передача абсурда посредством субъектной и речевой организации текста) и плана восприятия. К возможностям речевой организации текста в прозе Н. Гоголя можно отнести: инкрустации слова в контекст, намеренные нарушения лексической сочетаемости, особое построение сложных предложений, сочетание в одном предложении смыслов «утверждение – отрицание», смешение стилевых систем, использование средств языковой рефлексии, художественных деталей и иных выразительных средств языка и речи. В свою очередь, специфика прозы М. Булгакова предполагает полуфантастическое и фантастическое воплощение реальной действительности. Для переплетения реальности и фантастики М. Булгаков активно использует возможности хронотопа текстов, лексемы со значением отклонения от нормы («странный», «безумный», «нелепый», «необъяснимый» и др.) и целый ряд речевых средств, выражающих отношение автора к тому, о чем идет речь. Перспективы исследования абсурда

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автор данной статьи связывает с публицистическим форматом дискурса. Это выявление информационной природы абсурда (первоначальное отсутствие смысла или его трансформации); определение жанровой формы абсурдных высказываний; характеристика функций абсурда и его речевых репрезентаций (средств кодирования); разработка серии приемов и целостной методики декодирования абсурда, а также установления его роли и места в парадигме публицистического дискурса.

*Ключевые слова:* абсурд; художественные тексты; художественный дискурс; русские писатели; литературные жанры; жанровые модели; речевая организация текста; субъектная организация текста; Н. В. Гоголь; М. А. Булгаков; медиатексты

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The concept of “absurd” in relation to an utterance can be considered from at least two angles – from the standpoint of content and from the standpoint of form. In terms of content, absurdity is understood as “absurdity, nonsense” [Dictionary of the Russian language 1981], “something illogical, absurd, contrary to common sense”. A broader definition of absurdity is given by V. I. Karasik: “Absurdity, understood as a significant absence of meaning where there should be meaning, permeates all aspects of human life due to the fact that in human nature the rational is inextricably linked with the irrational” [Karasik 2010: 136]. This makes it possible to consider something unreal and fantastic as absurd.

In turn, from the substantive and formal positions, the absurd is associated with the carnivalization of the utterance, cf., for example, the manifestations of the absurd in postmodernist texts: “... a playful, carnival element, everything is subject to mischievous transformations: being and its home – language, the virtual is fancifully woven into the real, traditional methods of nomination explode and invade someone else’s conceptual and thematic field, striking with the freshness and originality of form and content” [Smetanina 2002: 87].

As a means of text formation, the absurd was actively used in Russian literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and primarily in the works of N. V. Gogol and M. E. Saltykov-Shchedrin. M. E. Saltykov-Shchedrin considered the unfair social structure of Russian life to be absurd – “the known order of things”, which is the subject of satirical depiction, cf. an excerpt from a letter to the editors of the magazine “Vestnik Evropy” (1871): “Depicting life under the yoke of madness, I counted on arousing in the reader a bitter feeling, and by no means a cheerful disposition... For me, chronology does not present any constraints, because... I am not at all exposing history to ridicule, but a certain order of things” [Quoted from: Goryachkina 1976]. In turn, for N. V. Gogol, the absurd is an integral part of human existence, its necessary, system-forming feature, which has been noted by researchers of the writer’s work, cf., for example, the statement of V. Nabokov: “The absurd was Gogol’s favorite muse, but when I use the term ‘absurd’, I do not mean either the bizarre or the comic... It would be wrong to assert that Gogol places his characters in absurd situations. You cannot put a man in an absurd position if the whole world in which he lives is absurd; you cannot if you mean by the word ‘absurd’ something that evokes a chuckle or a shrug. But if you mean by it something that evokes pity... then the necessary gap appears, and

the pitiful creature, lost in the nightmarish, irresponsible Gogolian world, becomes ‘absurd’ by the law, so to speak, of inverse contrast” [Nabokov 1996: 125].

In this article, we have attempted to identify representations of the absurd in fiction based on a theoretical model of the genre. The model chosen for analysis has a three-part structure: the content plane, the expression plane, including the main carriers of the genre (subjective, spatio-temporal and intonational-speech organization, as well as the associative background) and the perception plane [Leyderman, Lipovetsky, Barkovskaya, Lozhkova 1996]. The absurd in the works of N. V. Gogol is represented at the levels of:

- 1) the content plane of the text (the use of absurd plot moves and situations);
- 2) the expression plane (the use of the possibilities of the subjective organization of the text: the author’s speech, someone else’s speech, including the speech of the characters, etc.). In addition, N. V. Gogol actively used the possibilities of the speech organization of the text, including:
  - words (inlays of words in the context);
  - phrases (violation of lexical compatibility, paradox, oxymoron);
  - sentences (specificity of sentence structure, combination of the meanings “affirmation” – “denial” in a sentence);
  - style (deliberate polystylism);
  - artistic details and other figurative means of language;
- 3) plan of text perception.

Let us give examples of the textual embodiment of the absurd in the works of N. V. Gogol (the story “The Overcoat”, the poem “Dead Souls”).

**1. The external absurdity of the plot as a whole:** “The life of the hero is observed:

- 1) in a ‘pure’, traditional form,
- 2) in a changed form (life in the era of the new overcoat) and
- 3) in a distorted form (after the loss of the overcoat and the death of the hero)” [Kozhin, Vedenyapina 1991: 58].

**2. An absurd situation** – the appearance of a dead man taking overcoats from passers-by (the fantastic nature of the situation is emphasized by the author):

– *Our poor story unexpectedly takes a fantastic ending. Rumors suddenly spread through St. Petersburg that at the Kalinkin Bridge and far beyond, a dead man in the form of an official began to appear at night, looking for some stolen overcoat and, under the guise of a stolen overcoat, tearing off all kinds of overcoats from all shoulders, without distinguishing*

rank or title... (The Overcoat, p. 149);

– And indeed, one Kolomna policeman saw with his own eyes how a ghost appeared from behind a house... being powerless, he did not dare to stop it, but followed it in the darkness until, finally, the ghost suddenly looked back and, stopping, asked: "What do you want?" and showed such a fist that you will not find in the living. (The Overcoat, p. 153).

However, the absurdity of this situation is also external, apparent. In connection with the above, researchers of the works of N. V. Gogol note: "Thus, it would seem absurdly (but in reality deeply logically) the story about the official and his overcoat ends – with a story about a ghost-robber who has great strength, and about a policeman who does not have strength where it is necessary, but shows his power in front of the disenfranchised" [Ibid.].

**3. Absurdity at the level of the subjective organization of the text (the actualization of the absurd by the hero of "Dead Souls" Chichikov himself):**

– "Well, what can you squeeze out of it, from this ball? Well, let's say, some writer decided to describe the whole scene as it is? Well, in the book, and there it would be just as senseless as in nature. What is it: moral or immoral? Simply the devil knows what it is! You spit, and then you close the book" (Dead Souls, p. 434).

**4. Absurdity at the level of the subjective organization of the text (emphasizing the meaninglessness of the hero's speech):**

– "And I came to you, Petrovich, that ..." It is necessary to know that Akaky Akakievich expressed himself mostly with prepositions, adverbs and, finally, such particles that have absolutely no meaning. If the matter was very difficult, he even had the habit of not finishing his sentences at all, so that he would often begin a speech with the words: "it's absolutely right...", and then nothing happened, and he himself would forget, thinking that he had already said everything (The Overcoat, p. 131);

– Then he would speak complete nonsense, so that nothing could be understood; one could only see that disordered words and thoughts were tossing and turning around the same overcoat (The Overcoat, p. 148);

– Having gone out into the street, Akaky Akakievich was as if in a dream. "This is how it is," he said to himself, "I really didn't think that it would turn out like this..." And then, after a short silence, he added: "So that's how it is! Finally, this is what happened, and I really couldn't have imagined that it would turn out like this." This was followed by another long silence, after which he said: "So and so! That's what, exactly, is so unexpected, that... that would be so... such and such a circumstance!" (The Overcoat, p. 133).

**5. Absurdity at the level of the subjective organization of the text (author's self-reflection):**

– Where exactly the official who invited us lived, unfortunately, we cannot say: our memory is beginning to fail us greatly, and everything that is in Petersburg, all the streets and houses have merged and mixed up so much in our heads that it is very difficult to get anything decent out of there (The Overcoat, p. 139).

**6. Absurdity at the level of the speech organization of the text (unexpected inlay of a word into the context):**

– He (Petrovich. – N. R.) took the overcoat out of the handkerchief in which he had brought it; the handkerchief

had just come from the laundress; he later rolled it up and put it in his pocket for use (The Overcoat, p. 137);

– The police had given orders to catch the dead man at any cost, alive or dead, and to punish him, as an example to others, in the most severe manner, and they barely even managed to do that (The Overcoat, p. 150).

**7. Absurdity at the level of speech organization of the text (violation of the normative compatibility of words in a phrase):**

– "No," thought the deceased, "names are all like that" (The Overcoat, p. 124);

– His neck... seemed unusually long, like those plaster kittens with dangling heads that Russian foreigners wear on their heads by the dozens (The Overcoat, p. 126).

**8. Absurdity at the level of speech organization of the text (semantic discrepancy between the beginning and the end of a complex sentence):**

– Driving up to the porch, he noticed two faces looking out of the window almost at the same time: a woman's, in a cap, narrow, long, like a cucumber, and a man's, round, wide, like Moldavian pumpkins, called gourds, from which balalajkas are made in Rus', two-stringed light balalajkas, the beauty and fun of a tenacious twenty-year-old guy, a flasher and a dandy, and winking and whistling at the white-breasted and white-necked girls who had gathered to listen to his quiet strangled strumming (Dead Souls, p. 354).

**9. Absurdity at the level of means of linguistic reflection** [Vepreva 2005; Sadova 2019], which, in combination with other possibilities of the language, correct the typical, standard image of the world to the Gogolian image:

– As for the rank (for we first of all need to declare the rank), he was what is called an eternal titular councilor, over whom, as is known, various writers have made fun and sharpened their fill, having the laudable habit of leaning on those who cannot bite (The Overcoat, p. 123).

**10. Absurdity at the level of artistic details that create a hyperbolized picture of the surrounding world:**

– The gallop was flying at full speed: the postmistress, the police captain, the lady with the blue feather, the lady with the white feather, the Georgian prince Chiphaiikhilidzev, the official from St. Petersburg, the official from Moscow, the Frenchman Kuku, Perzunovsky, Berebendovsky – everything rose up and rushed (Dead Souls, p. 423);

– And there, off to the side, four couples were dancing the mazurka; their heels were breaking the floor, and the army staff captain was working with his soul and body, his arms and legs, pulling off such steps that no one had ever pulled off in their dreams (Dead Souls, p. 428).

**11. Absurdity through deliberate departure from the canon and stylistic norm: mixing styles (polystylism) and pathos of the narrative:**

"The satirical, ironic, comic, and lyrical bizarrely coexist in various types of artistic speech and determine the aesthetic orientation in the selection and combination of speech means" [Kozhin, Vedenyapina 1991: 45]. Let us give examples of multi-style (high, colloquial, outdated) vocabulary in a small fragment of text:

The noise and squeal of iron brackets and rusty screws woke up a policeman at the other end of town, who, raising his halberd, screamed at the top of his lungs in his sleep: "Who goes there?" – but, seeing that no one was coming and

only a rattling sound could be heard from afar, he caught some kind of animal on his collar and, going over to a lamp, executed it right there on his fingernail. After which, having abandoned the halberd, he fell asleep again according to the rules of his knighthood (Dead Souls, p. 436).

12. Finally, about the creative reading of the works of N. V. Gogol, about attention to the language and style of the writer as a condition for **perceiving the absurdity of Gogol's world**, V. Nabokov said most accurately, in our opinion:

"Hints at something hidden behind crudely painted screens are so skillfully interspersed in the external fabric of the narrative that the civic-minded Russians completely missed them. But a creative reading of Gogol's story reveals that here and there in the most innocent description this or that word, sometimes just an adverb or particle, for example the words 'even' and 'almost', are written in such a way that the most harmless phrase suddenly explodes into a nightmarish firework; or a period which begins in a disjointed, conversational manner suddenly goes off the rails and turns into something irrational, where, in fact, it belongs; or just as suddenly a door opens and a mighty, foaming wave of poetry rushes in, only to immediately go down, or turn into self-parody, or burst forth with a phrase resembling a magician's patter, which is so characteristic of Gogol's style. This creates a sense of something ridiculous and at the same time unearthly, constantly lurking somewhere nearby, and here it is appropriate to remember that the difference between the comic side of things and their cosmic side depends on a single hissing consonant" [Nabokov 1996: 125–126].

Let us turn to the representations of the absurd in the works of 20<sup>th</sup> century writers. The text material used was M. Bulgakov's parody "The Crimson Island" and the stories "The Fatal Eggs", which clearly show the specifics of the writer's artistic world: "Bulgakov's world can have many incarnations, including semi-fantastic and fantastic ones, but all of these are facets of one, integral world, in which the 'high' and the 'low' are tragically comically merged and it is impossible to filter one from the other" [Yablokov 1994: 13]. It should be noted that reality and fantasy, which form a special, absurd artistic world, are also intertwined in other works by M. Bulgakov, for example, in the fantasy dilogy "Bliss" and "Ivan Vasilievich" [Babicheva 1985; 1988], but the limited space of the article does not allow us to use the text material in full. As in the previous case, we tried to trace the means of representing the absurd in two works at the level of three genre planes.

### **Absurdity at the level of the content plane (interaction of the actual content and the chronotope of the text)**

1. Absurdity of a situation taking place at the present time:

– "Snakes go in packs in the direction of Mozhaisk... laying incredible numbers of eggs. Eggs were noticed in the Dukhovskiy district..." (Fatal Eggs, p. 143).

2. Absurdity of a prospective situation:

– By God, it will work out, – Rokk suddenly said convincingly and sincerely, – your ray is so famous that you can raise at least elephants, not just chickens (Fatal Eggs, p. 119).

3. Absurdity of the preceding situation:

– Polaitis believed that none of this had happened at all, but that Rokk was simply mentally ill and had a terrible

hallucination... Rokk stood up. He came to his senses a little and said, stretching out his arms like a biblical prophet:

– Listen to me. Listen. Why don't you believe me? She was there. Where is my wife? (Fatal Eggs, p. 135).

4. Intentional illogicalities (inconsistency of meanings in the immediate context):

– Then there was an exchange of goods. The sailors unloaded glass beads, rotten sardines, saccharine, and fire-water from the Nadezhda onto the shore. The Ethiopians, wildly rejoicing, brought beaver skins, ivory, fish, eggs, and pearls onto the shore... Proper relations were established. The ships entered the bay, dumped English valuables, and took Ethiopian trash (Crimson Island, p. 64);

– What do you want, Ethiopian mug? – the gloomy commander asked dryly.

The Ethiopian ignored the compliment and immediately got down to business (Crimson Island, p. 68);

– Those who left stole a telescope, a broken machine gun, 100 cans of condensed milk, six door handles, 10 revolvers, and two European women. The lord cut up the remaining blackamoors and wrote down the cost of the stolen goods in a book (Crimson Island, p. 71–72);

– Allow me, your highness, to cut his throat with my own hands?

– Why not. With pleasure, – the lord answered good-naturedly, – only hurry up, don't delay the landing (Crimson Island, p. 75);

– When Bronsky appeared in the office, Persikov extended his kindness so much that he barked at him:

– Sit down! (Fatal Eggs, p. 107).

– The Emergency Commission for Combating Chicken Plague was renamed the Emergency Commission for Raising and Reviving Poultry Farming in the Republic, having been replenished with a new emergency troika of sixteen comrades (Fatal Eggs, p. 113).

5. Analogies:

– Immediately after the toads... the permanent guard of the institute, old man Vlas, who was not included in the class of naked reptiles, moved to a better world. The cause of his death, however, was the same as that of the poor reptiles, and Persikov determined it immediately:

– Lackoffood!

The scientist was absolutely right: Vlas needed to be fed flour, and the toads mealworms, but since the first disappeared, the second disappeared too (Fatal Eggs, p. 81).

### **Absurdity at the level of expression**

1. Use of the words strange / strangeness, crazy and other lexemes with the meaning of deviation from the norm (the specified meaning is supported by the context):

– He spoke in a creaky, thin, croaking voice and, among other oddities, had such... (Fatal Eggs, p. 79);

– History took on strange and monstrous dimensions (Fatal Eggs, p. 99);

– Professor Persikov's life took on a strange, restless and exciting coloring (Fatal Eggs, p. 100);

– A bald man with crazy and sightless eyes, with a drooping lower jaw (Fatal Eggs, p. 95);

– Persikov was struck by the main and most important feature of the man who entered. He was strangely old-fashioned (Fatal Eggs, p. 116);

– The next day was marked by the strangest and most

inexplicable events (Fatal Eggs, p. 128);

– ...the conversations at the state farm took on a strange and ambiguous tone for Alexander Semenovich (Fatal Eggs, p. 129);

– The strange events in the grove and on the pond were immediately forgotten (Fatal Eggs, p. 129);

– ...A greenish night spread over the state farm and its environs. It was mysterious and even, one might say, frightening (Fatal Eggs, p. 130);

– Alexander Semenovich paused a little, muttered something else and fell into a state of amazement. The matter really was strange (Fatal Eggs, p. 131);

– Neither the absurd rumor that flew through Moscow about some snakes, nor the strange telegram shouted out in the evening newspaper remained unknown to him (Fatal Eggs, p. 140);

– The typesetters... read the telegrams that were now coming all night long, every quarter of an hour, becoming more and more monstrous and strange (Fatal Eggs, p. 141);

– ... Military units stopped the panic of madmen running along the railroad switches from the Smolensk province to Moscow (Fatal Eggs, p. 144).

2. Violation of lexical combinability:

– a drunken telegram;

– a brew of madness;

– the Ocean, long since called the Pacific for its storms and waves (Crimson Island, p. 63);

– ... a famous shoemaker and artilleryman;

– Kiri, as usual, lay unusable in his wigwam (Crimson Island, p. 67);

– Ha-ha-ha-ha, – the circus laughed so that the blood ran cold in the veins, joyfully and sadly, and under the old dome, trapezes and cobwebs fluttered (Fatal Eggs, p. 111);

– Persikov, increasingly moving away from the dying down chicken questions, became more and more immersed in studying the beam (Fatal Eggs, p. 114);

– Persikov, multi-colored, bluish-pale, with crazy eyes, rose from his stool (Fatal Eggs, p. 143);

– Then a shrill squeal pierced the entire state farm, grew and took off, and the waltz began to jump as if with a broken leg (Fatal Eggs, p. 133);

3. Deformations of phrases:

– working until they lost their hind legs...

4. Personifications:

– ...the cockroaches fell somewhere, showing their malicious attitude towards war communism (Fatal Eggs, p. 81);

– The sun sat low with a fiery face between the faces of young sunflowers (Fatal Eggs, p. 99);

– ...the pipe croaked to him the most kind and every kind of assistance (Fatal Eggs, p. 114).

5. Hyperboles:

– A chicken, the size of a horse...

– On the stage, next to the pulpit, sat on a glass table, breathing heavily and turning gray, on a plate, a damp frog the size of a cat (Fatal Eggs, p. 114);

– Persikov came to life, and the whole world suddenly learned about it, only in December 1926 the brochure was published: "More on the question of reproduction of plaque-bearing or chitons." 126 p. "News of the IV University" (Fatal Eggs, p. 82).

**Absurdity at the level of perception (ideas, associations that arise both in the readers of the text and in its characters)**

– Newsboys growled and howled between the wheels of the engines:

– A nightmarish find in the dungeon! Poland is preparing for a nightmarish war!! Professor Persikov's nightmarish experiments!! (Fatal Eggs, p. 144).

Thus, the category of absurdity in the texts of N. Gogol and M. Bulgakov allows us to simultaneously talk about the real and create a new reality; the real is transformed, being included in an unreal context, and this syncretism maintains the reader's interest in the content of the works.

At present, the number of absurd statements has increased sharply in another format of discourse – in journalistic discourse. This happened for a number of reasons, for example, due to the transition of online laws to offline, but most importantly – under the influence of postmodernist texts, their illogicality, discreteness, playfulness and intertextuality: "One of the principles of the modern cultural format – the post-modern format – is not to look for meaning in anything, to look for a conspiracy in everything. This is how modern culture is structured. It is a pity that ideology does not understand its true goals (it should still formulate meanings) and follows the lead of general cultural life ... Today, the entire country lives in the format of postmodernism. Look, we now live in a country that is simultaneously the heir to the Russian Empire, and the heir to the Soviet Union, and a globalist country, and at the same time very archaic. Part of the country lives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – in a post-industrial society. Part – in the industrial society of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and some territories have not yet emerged from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. That is, we live in a very complex, patchwork country, and such patchwork is precisely the characteristic feature of postmodernism" (Alexey Ivanov. A Hero of Our Time. AiF Ural. 2020, no. 40).

In addition to the above, the increase in the number of absurd statements was influenced by a change in the pathos of media texts towards their irony [Zheltukhina 2000; Kostomarov 1999; Lyapun 2009; Shilihina 2014, etc.]. As an example, we will cite the ironic headlines of reviews by the famous journalist Maxim Sokolov, which are built on the principle of combining different concepts in one logical series and with violations of the accepted lexical compatibility:

– Ephemeral Lisa and Viagra against Ukraine;

– Laureates old and young, clinical literature, the hand of friendship from Amsterdam, a hot Estonian guy;

– Two people's artists, a oatmeal secretary of state, replacement of dollars with tugriks, an ascetic senator, etc.

(for more information on the textual embodiment of the category of absurdity in modern media, see Ruzhentseva 2023). In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the category of absurdity, widely used in text formation in modern media, is based not so much on 19<sup>th</sup>-century journalism as on fiction (in addition to N. Gogol and M. Bulgakov, absurdity is the most important means of text formation for M. E. Saltykov-Shchedrin, A. Averchenko, M. Zoshchenko and other writers). In turn, in the texts of modern media, "the absurdity of human social existence... is 'removed' by a grotesquely ironic – in the traditions of romanticism of E. Hoffmann and N. Gogol – perception of this

absurdity, which speaks of its spiritual overcoming, that is, of the transience of chaos and the invincibility of the human intellect, capable of comprehending the very absurdity of existence" [Kagan 1996: 396].

As a consequence, the prospects for studying the absurd in the texts of modern media are, from our point of view:

1. Identification of the informational nature of the absurd:

- a) lack of meaning in the statement;
- b) re-accentuation (transformation) of the original meaning.

2. Definition of the genre nature of absurd statements.

3. Characterization of the functions of the absurd within the framework of a text fragment, an entire text or a group of texts.

4. Characteristics of speech representations of the absurd (means of encoding absurd statements).

5. Development of a series of techniques and a holistic methodology for decoding the absurd and determining its place in the paradigm of journalistic discourse.

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