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Idiomatics and Their Semiotic Reflection in the Flow of Images and Words in Media

Abstract

Phraseology is the national wealth of every language and culture in general. It is unique, has a historical thread, reflects the wisdom of ancestors and the observations of contemporaries. It can be serious, funny, instructive, figurative and direct. That is why it is productive in literature, the media space and in common colloquial language. The authors of the article follow the emergence of idioms as an element of semiotics, which can be understood as a sign. Through semiotics, one can perceive not only the creation of idioms, but also their potential interpretation for the reader or viewer and track their impact and effect on the media perceiver. Semiotics provides phraseology with a sign subsystem in media space, advertising, billboards, caricatures and in the form of images in the printed press. Roman Jakobson and Umberto Eco are semioticians who brought a new look to semiosis in general. By doing so, they expanded the field of research to unexplored dimensions.

Introduction

Man has always perceived the signs around him. A large number of signs. In one system, but also in several systems, even in the entire hierarchy of subsystems, although at first, he was of course not aware of such a classification. He perceived them long before the emergence of semiotics, long before the creation of its theories, definition, or division of signs into categories and their subcategories. The process of semiosis, as we call it today, is, simply put, a natural, primal ability of man, where he mostly learns through observation to associate an upcoming event with individual signs, manifestations, and subsequently the discovery of an object, phenomenon, state, etc. What is more, animals also have this ability. For example, in relation to the weather. A simple clouding of the sky or loss of the sun can be a sign that the weather will change. Hearing thunder, subsequent lightning, greater wind speed – all signs of a storm that will result in, for example, a downpour, temperature drop, risk of injury, etc. And then there is a whole series of conventional signs, which are mostly less familiar to animals because they were created and agreed upon by humans. But even here, animals can notice the meaning of certain signs over time, or they are purposefully taught or trained on them by human activity. It must be stated that these conventionalized signs work perfectly in our reality, in various spheres, both in industry, science and in everyday life. For example, the system of signs in traffic – dozens of traffic signs, symbols, colours, signals, shapes – anyone who knows the meaning of these signs understands whole sentences, orders, prohibitions, instructions, restrictions, recommendations...

1 The Roots of Semiotics in the Past, in Philosophy, Scientific Research and Mass Culture

Considering this diversity and abundance of signs in our reality, it is almost impossible to define a sign with some universal sentence, definition, or characteristic. From

the history of semiotics as a science, we know that this was already attempted by ancient philosophers, where the foundations of semiotics were born, and later all subsequent generations of semioticians and semiotic schools. Semiotics had already begun to be established in ancient times. *"The problem of signs was dealt with in the Middle Ages by philosophers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, and others. The Middle Ages enriched the science of signs with the theory of symbols and also with the elaboration of the dispute about universals. The greatest authority of ancient and medieval medicine – Galénos, a Roman physician and philosopher, developed under the Greek term semiotics the science of symptoms by which diseases were recognized"*[1]. Černý and Holeš summarize when they claim that most semioticians agree at least that the most acceptable definition has two important parts and reads approximately as follows: 1. A sign is something behind which something else is hidden. 2. There is someone who is aware of such a relationship[2]. The representative of the medieval semiotic school, St. Augustine, was credited with creating the first part of this definition when he claimed: A sign (signum, signans) is something behind which something else is hidden (signatum, referent, thing). The authorship of the second part of the definition of the sign was completed by Charles Sanders Peirce, and we will mention his great contribution to the terrarium of the sign later. Both parts of the definition are a relatively non-specific statement, but on the other hand, they open up unexpected possibilities of realizing the entire system of signs, especially today, in times of scientific, technical and artistic progress.

In the modern age, semiotics began to develop rapidly in different directions and into different areas of human life. Several well-known philosophers, logicians, linguists, literary authors, representatives of art, creators of photography contributed to it. In this dimension, the 19th and 20th centuries are ground-breaking, and it would be appropriate to take a moment to consider how extensively the theory of semiotics developed at this stage. Ondruš and Sabol mention two names as revolutionary modern semioticians, especially in the linguistic sphere - theorist and philosopher Charles Kay Ogden (1899 – 1957) and literary aesthetician I. A. Richards (1893 –1979). They are the authors of the publication *The Meaning of Meaning*, which was published in 1923. This book forms the basis of everything that shaped semiotics as

Figure 1: Dozens and hundreds of signs surround us every day. Some of them are vital and some we don't like to see at all.
Source: MALEC, P.: *Kontrolky v aute a jejich význam*. [online]. [2023-02-24]. Available at: <https://napovime.cz/navod/kontrolky-v-aute-a-jejich-vyznam/>.

1   ČERNÝ, J., HOLEŠ, J.: *Sémiotika*. Prague : Portál, 2004, p. 22.

2   Ibid, p. 16.

the science of signs, sign systems, and the relationships between them. It shows the reference triangle model, which graphically shows the semiotic relations between the symbol, the referent, and the reference[3].
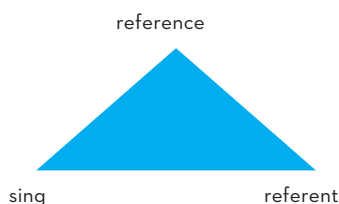

Figure 2: Semiotic triangle by Ogden and Richards
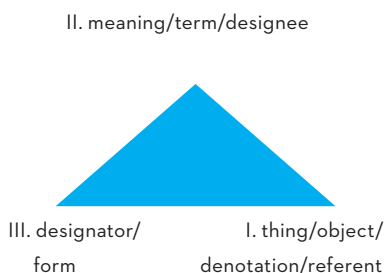Source: ČERNÝ, J., HOLEŠ, J.: *Sémiotika.* Prague : Portál, 2004, p. 45.

Figure 3: Philosopher G. Frege and his semiotic triangle, or terms used within this scheme. This semiotic triangle is better known to the wider public.
Source: ONDRUŠ, Š., SABOL, J.: *Úvod do štúdia jazykov.* Bratislava : SPN, 1981, p. 62.

However, the American philosopher and logician Charles Sanders Peirce (1839 – 1914) was a truly historical, world-class, essential and fundamental expert for the creation of modern semiotics. As stated by Černý and Holeš in their chapter Modern semiotics of the 20th century, his triadic concept of the sign, i.e., the division of signs into icons, indexes, and symbols is the dominant contribution. Among icons, Peirce includes all signs that are based on a relationship of similarity with the signified object, i.e., pictures and photographs, diagrams, chemical formulas, maps, etc., from language signs mainly metaphors and onomatopoeic expressions. He states that indexes are all the signs that are connected to the signified object by a relation of context, i.e., for example, footprints in the sand, the "dance" by which bees indicate to other bees the distance and amount of food before entering the hive, from linguistic signs especially so-called ciphers (for example, I, he, it, here, now, yesterday), i.e., such terms that refer to persons and other data resulting from the context. Finally, symbols are those signs that are connected to the signified object by sheer convention, i.e., primarily the absolute majority of language signs, but also various chemical, mathematical, and logical symbols, a whole range of symbols used in art, religion, etc. Peirce's classification of signs into icons, indexes, and symbols is now considered a permanent part of modern semiotics. However, it must be taken into account that we can come across such signs of a mixed nature, in which one type predominates, but to a greater or lesser extent, elements of two or even all three mentioned types occur in them. To illustrate this, the cross is by convention a symbol of Christianity, but it is partly iconic because it resembles the cross on which Jesus was crucified. In the case of road signs, warning signs are framed in red, which is the symbol of danger by convention, but also has the character of an index or icon, because it is associated with the colour of (spilled) blood, for the same reason red is also a symbol of revolution. The cross on a traffic sign marking an intersection has an iconic character (it resembles an intersection), but its specific shape and size are given by convention, so the sign also has the character of a symbol[4].

The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857 – 1913) had a significant influence on the development of European linguistics and semiotics. In his Course in General Linguistics, published three years after his death, he proposed a completely new concept of linguistics. In contrast to Peirce's triadic approach, Saussure's conception of the linguistic sign is consistently dualistic. It distinguishes the signifiant (signifier) and signifié (signified), which as a whole relate to a certain concept. He also defined three basic properties of a linguistic sign: linearity, arbitrariness, and discontinuity. To sum it up, linearity means that individual characters (words) in spoken and written text can be ordered exclusively one after the other. Arbitrariness (arbitrary character) means that both

3   ČERNÝ, J., HOLEŠ, J.: *Sémiotika.* Prague : Portál, 2004, pp. 26-27.

4   ČERNÝ, J., HOLEŠ, J.: *Sémiotika.* Prague : Portál, 2004, pp. 26-27.

basic components of a linguistic sign are connected by a clear convention, i.e., that there is no logical relationship between them. Discontinuity means that while the non-linguistic reality (the world that surrounds us) is registered in our brain as a continuum (according to Saussure, literally as an amorphous nebula), the linguistic sign always marks its precisely defined section[5].

Figure 4: Linguistic sign by Ferdinand de Saussure
Source: ČERNÝ, J., HOLEŠ, J.: *Sémiotika*. Prague : Portál, 2004, p. 40.

If we claimed in the introduction that the theory of semiotics of the 19th and 20th centuries was ground-breaking, it was mainly thanks to Roman Jakobson. In the linguistics of the 20th century, we find only a few researchers as versatile as the Russian linguist Roman Jakobson (1896 – 1982). As far as semiotics is concerned, since his youth, he devoted his attention not only to natural language but also to other semiotic systems, especially folklore, mythology, and poetry. Suddenly, semiotics no longer sees signs only in the form of a linguistic sign, pictogram, symbol, signal, etc., his perception of semiotics was much broader. In his essay *Roman Jakobson's Influence on the Development of Semiotics*, Umberto Eco described in depth and detail Jakobson's influence on the development of modern semiotics. It shows convincingly that Jakobson was significantly involved in the formation of all eight basic assumptions on which contemporary semiotic research is based. These are the assumptions, listed by Černý and Holeš[6]:

- A sign exists whenever a referencing relationship exists;
- Denotation covers the entire field of culture;
- There are many types of signs, semiotics must work with an interdisciplinary approach;
- Semiotic systems can be described from a unifying point of view, they are systems of rules (codes);
- It is necessary to describe the diversity of signs in their creation, response, perception and memory;
- Semiotics must study the syntactic structure of sign systems, but even if they appear to be purely syntactic, they admit semantic interpretations of their combinatorial possibilities;
- Semiotic theory studies not only the structure of linguistic means, but also the structure of the universe of transmitted contents. There is no semiosis without the incorporation of semantics;
- Semiotics, like linguistics, must move from the theory of individual terms and "phrases" to the theory of co-text (in addition to syntax and semantics, it should also include pragmatics).

The revolutionary contribution of one of the most important contemporary semioticians – Umberto Eco (1932 – 2016), professor at the University of Bologna, author of more than fifty books, who worked at several Italian universities in the past and temporarily worked at many universities abroad – is equally important for the topic of this paper. For students of mass media communication, for example, his characteristics of mass communication may be interesting. Eco[7] argues that, like aesthetics, it is a field that covers many disciplines, from psychology to sociology and pedagogy. Recently, however, there is a tendency to see the problem of mass communication

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5   See: ONDRUŠ, Š., SABOL, J.: *Úvod do štúdia jazykov*. Bratislava : SPN, 1981, p. 62; See also: ČERNÝ, J., HOLEŠ, J.: *Sémiotika*. Prague : Portál, 2004, p. 28.

6   ČERNÝ, J., HOLEŠ, J.: *Sémiotika*. Prague : Portál, 2004, pp. 31-32.

7   ECO, U.: *Teorie sémiotiky*. Prague : Vydavatelství Argo, 2009, p. 383.

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from the point of view of semiotics, when semiotic methods have been recognized as useful in explaining numerous phenomena of mass communication[8]. The study of mass communication exists as a discipline not only when it examines the technique or effects of a certain genre (detective, comic book, song, film) using a special research method, but when it proves that all these genres have common features within society. Umberto Eco brought a large number of views to semiotics in general, but also to its individual parts. In the 1960s, Eco dealt with issues of modern art, analysing film, posters, comic strips, and advertisements. He was also interested in the theory of architecture. In 1968, he published the book *La estructura ausente (The Missing Structure)*, which was one of the best introductions to semiotics at the time. Eco sought order in semiotic research and terminology. He combined Saussure's and Peirce's semiotics.

We cannot forget to mention the contribution of Slovak semiotics, which developed mainly from the 1970s onwards. Doubravová enumerates: The topic of semiotics and communication was related to a number of studies by Žilka (e.g., on the poetics of comics), Krausová (the meaning of form and the form of meaning) and Miko (the system

of literary expression). Zajac and Bako consistently dealt with the methodology of art history targeted in the sense of the Viennese school[9]. From a linguistic point of view, they were close to the semiotics of Ondruš, Sabol, Mistrík, and others. The latter characterizes semiotics in the 1990s as follows: This modern discipline is closely related to philosophy, logic, and linguistics, and its task is *"to recognize and classify various signs, symbols, signs, codes indexes, signals and in general all formal means, by use of which something is marked or taken down, which tell a person something or with the help of which the person himself provides certain information"*[10].

2 Semiotics in Media Phraseology

If we take into account the definition of a sign, we will come to the conclusion that the definition of a sign corresponds to sounds or words of natural languages, chemical symbols, numbers, letters, maps, flags, corporate brands and logos, banknotes, silence before the storm, poetic metaphors, colour composition of images, ultimately, an almost unlimited number of many other objects or phenomena. Language signs, in fact, entire systems of language signs provide similarly unprecedented possibilities. If we consider their naming function in a

word and a sentence, the composition sign–image, or more specifically word, and image, is very interesting[11]. Based on the scheme of the semiotic triangle, we know how the connection between the sign, sensory perception and mental process works. A person remembers under a word (language sign) its meaning and sensory perception of the thing itself. For example, under the word o-t-e-c (father), he remembers a man who fathered someone, he can approximate his (un)clear internal and external characteristics, his basic features. However, if we look even further, if we do not perceive only the joining of language signs into groups (let us say into words), but we also start to perceive the joining of two or three such groups into higher ranks, we get to some word combinations. They could just be ordinary combined names, i.e., language signs that are grouped in words and those mostly in dual mode form connections such as class book, parking ticket, sunglasses, office paper. These connections create meaning and somehow specify it, nothing more.

And then, if we return to the idea that a language sign can connect a word with a specific image and vice versa, an image with a word, we will find that we actually have such groupings of language signs, naming

8   PRAVDOVÁ, H.: Phenomenon of Amusemet and Role of Stereotypes in Production and Acceptance of Media Culture. In *Communication Today*, 2011, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 10.

9   DOUBRAVOVÁ, J.: *Sémiotika v teorii a praxi*. Prague : Portál, 2008, p. 34.
10   MISTRÍK, J.: *Štylistika*. 3rd Edition. Bratislava : SPN, 1999, p. 148.

11   See: RUSŇÁKOVÁ, L., PROSTINÁKOVÁ HOSSOVÁ, M.: Signs and Values of Mainstream Audio-Visual Content Intended for Children and Youth. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 26-52; See also: MAGO, Z.: Easter Eggs in Digital Games as a Form of Textual Transcendence (Case Study). In *Acta Ludologica*, 2019, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 48-57.

units, which not only carry simple information about things, events, use, shape, colour, etc., but they can be the bearer of a whole unique idea, lesson, estimate, mood, situation, experience, which are evident not only in the current situation, but are already known to generations before us. They are historical and still current, many are the same in different languages, countries, cultures. Yes, we are aiming for idioms or phraseologisms – that is, fixed phrases that are characterized by imagery, expressiveness and impossibility of literal translation. Phraseology is the national wealth of every language and culture in general. It is unique, has a historical thread, reflects the wisdom of ancestors and the observations of contemporaries. It can be serious, funny, emotional, instructive, figurative and direct. That is why it is productive in literature, the media space and in common colloquial language. In the semiotic reflections of Roman Jakobson, such elements of signs appear as the basic pillars of contemporary semiotic research. Later, Umberto Eco also

confirms this thesis, especially in the theory of signs in mass culture. It is therefore worth mentioning taking a closer look at phraseology and their way of creation and use, at the connection of a word, an expression with a specific image, especially in the media environment. In connection with the process and methods of formation of phraseological units, the professional literature talks about phraseologisation, which is understood in two ways: *"Firstly, phraseologisation means - in parallel with the terms lexicalization or grammaticalization – a process in which a free connection turns into an idiom. Secondly, phraseologisation means all ways of forming idioms, i.e., any procedure that results in an idiom"*[12]. In the second case, it is a broader understanding of the term phraseologisation, which, according to Mlacek presupposes all such *"procedures in which idioms arise from units of a non-phraseological nature"*[13], i.e., the emergence of an idiom by re-evaluating the meaning of an existing free phrase, the emergence of an idiom from a

word or from a set phrase of a non-phraseological nature[14] and *"procedures of creating new idioms from already existing phraseological units"*, i.e., the emergence of an idiom by changing a phraseological unit, while the term change includes "various processes that affect the formal construction or meaning validity of an idiom"[15]. This is about any change of idiom, which in temporary variability leads to the emergence of a relatively or completely independent unit[16], in the case of which the theory speaks of phraseological derivation. Its result can be a quite special idiom, a variant of an idiom, most often lexical, or different types of idiom updates[17]. Other phraseological mechanisms include *"the development of polysemy" and "the emergence of idioms according to other phraseological analogies"*[18]. Miko (a linguist who, among other things, dealt with the semiotic relations of expression in the literary environment) explains the emergence of phraseological units from the point of view captured by such a scheme[19]:

Life situation:	**Association:**	**Idiom (in Slovak):**	**Its archetype:**
we consistently and insistently but at the same time unsuccessfully try to convince somebody	in Slovak as if we had beaten his head off	to beat something into someone's head	repeatedly and unsuccessfully convince somebody about something
(LIFE)	**(CONSCIOUSNESS)**	**(LANGUAGE)**	

12   MLACEK, J.: *Slovenská frazeológia.* Bratislava : SPN, 1980, p. 268.

13   Ibid, pp. 269-270.

14   Ibid, p. 269.

15   Ibid, p. 270.

16   Ibid.

17   Ibid, pp. 30-31.

18   MLACEK, J., ĎURČO, P. et al.: *Frazeologická terminológia.* Bratislava : Stimul, 1995, p. 134.

19   MIKO, F. et al.: *Frazeológia* v škole. Bratislava : SPN, 1989, p. 18.

As we can see, Jakobson's and Eco's thesis is confirmed here, that the signs of semiotics are also significant when cultural and linguistic components overlap with the image. According to Miko, the presented scheme of the emergence of idioms shows clear parallels with the semiotic triangle. However, a figurative expression becomes an idiom only when it is used, repeated, stabilized, when others start using it and when it no longer falls into oblivion. The constant emergence of new and new figurative phrases is *''simply the necessity of communication and its social function''*[20]. Phraseological units are by their meaning and function complex linguistic elements, which is evidenced by the wide variety of opinions on the definition of the basic unit – the phrasal idiom and its features, even in Slovak phraseology. This variety of opinions is manifested in the relation to the meaning of an idiom, when, for example, Miko recommends not even talking about the meaning of the idiom in the linguistic perception.

In his phraseo-didactic guidebook *Phraseology at School*, he does not speak about the direct meaning of the phraseological unit, but only about the archetype, and states that *"an idiom can have several parallel meaning and evaluation aspects. It is a very formable, multidimensional means of expression. The meaning is*

sometimes so complex, inaccessible, "encrypted" in the image that the archetype expresses it often only by a broad periphrastic description, in many cases only approximatively, "approximating", even in several synonymous interpretations. We are often in a situation where we can satisfactorily explain an idiom by using another, more common phraseological phrase"* [21]. Miko defines how he understands the archetype – *"it cannot be considered an exact meaning equivalent, but only an approximation to the true meaning of a phraseological phrase. Therefore, instead of 'meaning', it is better to talk about the semantic interpretation of phraseological phrases"*[22]. Thus, he proposes archetype (true meaning) as a starting point in a situation where an idiom can be satisfactorily explained only by another, more well-known idiom.

Miko defines a phraseological unit with regard to the life situation which makes up its meaning, in such a way that it *"more concisely and precisely expresses and evaluates typical, usually, life situations and conditions which are more difficult to be captured, as well as phenomena of external reality, further the characteristics of people and things, relationships, problems and actions of people, motives, causes and consequences, etc. It happens through certain*

fixed images (metaphorical and metonymic type). As a rule, images of particular and striking life, physical, mental, material features, events, phenomena and characteristics are used for this"*[23]. The complex model of this definition primarily distinguishes three constitutive features of an idiom. Ďurčo classifies it among the semasiological models of phraseological meaning and refers to it as "the so-called functional semantic model of idioms"[24].

How is an idiom as a sign used in the media environment? Literally massively. Relevant research in this field was published by Habiňák[25], Janovec[26] and Magalová[27], not only in domestic, but also in foreign media. For example, in a contemporary edition of the newspaper, we can easily find dozens of idioms of various types, origin, construction, and so on.

23   Ibid, p. 17.

24   ĎURČO, P.: Metodologické problémy všeobecnej frazeológie. In MLACEK, J., ĎURČO, P.: *Frazeologické štúdie I.* Bratislava : STIMUL, 1996, p. 107.

25   See: HABIŇÁK, A.: *Frazeológia v masmediálnom priestore: vzdelávanie a printové médiá.* Trnava : Fakulta masmediálnej komunikácie UCM v Trnave, 2021; HABIŇÁK, A.: Linguistic Culture, Phraseologisms and Phraseo-Didactics in Slovak Language. In *European Journal of Science and Theology,* 2019, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 9-17; HABIŇÁK, A.: *Slovná zásoba v masmédiách: teoretické východiská a prax.* Trnava : Fakulta masmediálnej komunikácie UCM v Trnave, 2020; HABIŇÁK, A.: The Relations Between Idioms and Language Culture in the Mass Media Space [Electronic]. In *Cukurova : 9th International Scientific Researches Conference.* Ankara : IKSAD, 2022, pp. 320-327.

26   JANOVEC, L.: *Svět v obrazech a ve frazeologii. World in Pictures and in Phraseology.* Prague : Pedagogická fakulta UK, 2018.

27   MAGALOVÁ, G.: *Frazeológia (nielen) pre žurnalistov.* Nitra : Katedra žurnalistiky FF UKF, 2008.

21   Ibid, p. 22.

22   Ibid, p. 23.

20   Ibid, p. 19.

There are even so many of them that it seems to change the structure of the newspaper, the ranking of the daily, or a change in the linguistic style. This happens due to the fact that idioms relate not only to highly cultivated discourse as proof of its preciseness, playfulness, imagery and rhetoric, but also as proof of closeness to the people, their experiences, tradition, but often also to expressiveness, and so they also belong to the portfolio of colloquial style and colloquialism in general. When analysing idioms in a journalistic text, we can proceed from a word to an image, or vice versa, from an image to a word. We will show just a few examples in pictures where the idiom is a structural element of the headline of a newspaper or TV news.

There, the recipient of a journalistic text (reader, viewer) has to imagine its meaning in the idiom, and often the entire situation, event, action or act that is hidden behind it. We can compare examples of domestic[28] and foreign media[29] that use idioms as a descriptive element in the media text or directly in the headline:

Figure 5: Examples of idioms in tabloids.
Source: *Teaching Idioms.* [online]. [2023-02-24]. Available at: <https://theeducationalimposters. wordpress.com/2020/06/09/teaching-idioms/>; See also: *Šachová figúrka za pár drobných spraví z muža boháča: Keď ju ukázal odborníkovi, padla mu sánka.* [online]. [2023-02-24]. Available at: <https://www.cas.sk/clanok/846534/ sachova-figurka-za-par-drobnych-spravi-z-muza-bohaca-ked-ju-ukazal-odbornikovi-padla-mu-sanka?AT=wgt.article_clanok-cas.c.x...A>.

The opposite semiotic manifestation of phraseology in the media is an image that complements the text. More precisely, it complements the text semantically. The semiosis of the image is necessary here, otherwise the reader cannot understand the intention of the author of the text. Here, the reader or viewer can only be partially successful. If they know the idiom, their semiosis will be identical to the author's intention when conceiving the text. If they do not know the idiom, their semiosis and the author's will be different. However, it does not necessarily have to be incorrect. It will differ from the author's, which can shift the entire field of intelligibility to a different spectrum. This also presupposes the fact that the author of the media text knows the correct form and meaning of the idiom. Sometimes the meaning of an idiom is used incorrectly or the links in idioms are crossed. Another interesting situation occurs when the recipient of a journalistic text is informed about the content of the article by a headline in the form of an idiom, but without context with other signs of the media space, such as a photo or image, they cannot guess the content of the article.

We can present this more complex situation by the example of a Slovak idiom "to kneel down before someone" (to ask for someone's hand in marriage / in English to propose). As long as the reader/ viewer only sees the headline in the form of an idiom (at least a potential one), they do not know for sure what the article will be about. However, as soon as they come to a connection

28   *Otec Britney Spears nemá chrbtovú kosť: Maximálne drzé, čo od speváčky chce!* [online]. [2023-24-02]. Available at: <https://www.cas.sk/ clanok/2622931/otec-britney-spears-nema-chrbtovu-kost-maximalne-drze-co-od-spevacky-chce/>; See also: *Vo výchove má Slovensko maslo na hlave, tvrdí Jana Dubovcová.* [online]. [2023-24-02]. Available at: <https://sita.sk/vo-vychove-ma-slovensko-maslo-na-hlave-tvrdi-jana-dubovcova/>; LUKÁČ, M: *Kto chce s vlkmi žiť, musí s nimi vyť. Inak si s ním vytrú – zrak.* [online]. [2023-24-02]. Available at: <https://blog.sme. sk/miroslavlukac1/politika/kto-chce-s-vlkmi-zit-musi-s-nimi-vyt-inak-si-s-nim-vytru-zrak>.

29   *Teaching Idioms.* [online]. [2023-02-24]. Available at: <https://theeducationalimposters. wordpress.com/2020/06/09/teaching-idioms/>.

with another semiotic sign – a photograph – they understand the meaning of the headline, and thus also the content of the entire article. Compare the listed headlines and their possible interpretation by readers[30].

Media semiotics represents one of the applied semiotics, which directly provides a way to clarify the origin and use of signs in human communication. If we start to analyse a journalistic text or a specific edition of a newspaper from this point of view, then we have to conclude that it contains many signs of different sign systems. Obviously, it is not only about language signs, or the entire language code. From this point of view, we have to perceive images, headlines, photographs, cover page, font, logos, used colours, etc.

as separate signs. A very strong effect for the reader or viewer is certainly the reduction of the written and the preference for the visual. Moreover, from a semiotic and logical point of view, it is often a matter of reducing informational content and preferring interpretive content. As is generally known, one of the productive methods of semiotics is interpretation. The use of idioms in such a way is then an extremely productive procedure in the production of a journalistic text, However, there are some risks. To illustrate it, we can mention at least two of the most dominant:

The first is related to the standard and refinement of discourse since several idioms are almost colloquial. Many of them come from slang, which is already substandard from the point of view of the standard[31]. This, in turn, is related to the change in language style in journalism. When thinking about the language styles of the Slovak language, their origin, development,

separation of individual secondary styles from primary language styles, monitoring the inventory of means of expression, it can be concluded that Slovak stylistics is a living organism that continues to develop. We know that the journalistic style originally arose from the educative style and was most widely used in the rhetorical style. However, as Mistrík states, the emergence of the journalistic style was conditioned by a complex of factors brought about by time, the development of society and technology, but especially socio-political conditions[32]. The thesis is confirmed even 50 years after the lecture where the aforementioned Mistrík's statement was presented for the first time. It is still true that these factors characterize and determine journalistic style. Social changes, political culture, a change in the hierarchy of values in society, the rapid development of science and technology, all of this affects the form of individual language styles even today.

Habiňák sees much greater changes in contemporary media. He claims: *"We can observe a crossover, the penetration of the colloquial into the journalistic. A style that arose from the educative, or rhetorical style nowadays shifts closer to the colloquial. Yes, we have been witnessing it for a longer period, mainly in tabloids, but not only*

30   *Fotogaléria: Pokľakol až po päťdesiatke: Predstaviteľ Chandlera z Priateľov sa zasnúbil s mladou manažérkou.* [online]. [2023-02-24]. Available at: <https://www.cas.sk/fotogaleria/1056926/poklakol-az-po-patdesiatke-predstavitel-chandlera-z-priatelov-sa-zasnubil-s-mladou-manazerkou/5/>; See also: FERENČÍK, T.: *Hokejista pokľakol pred priateľku za potlesku plného štadióna.* [online]. [2023-02-24]. Available at: <https://myorava.sme.sk/c/20737228/hokejista-poklakol-pred-priatel-ku-za-potlesku-plneho-stadiona.html>; SZEKERES, E.: *Obama sa ho zastal, Trump ho hanil. Pokľakol počas hymny a kluby ho už nechceli. Stal sa aktivistom.* [online]. [2023-02-24]. Available at: <https://dennikn.sk/1948699/obama-sa-ho-zastal-trump-hanil-poklakol-pocas-hymny-a-kluby-ho-uz-nechceli-stal-sa-aktivistom>; *Na odbernom mieste si vojak pokľakol pred zdravotníčku. Aha, čo sa stalo!* [online]. [2023-02-24]. Available at: <https://www.slovakwoman.sk/na-od-bernom-mieste-si-vojak-poklakol-pred-zdravotnicku-aha-co-sa-stalo/>; *Super Bowl ovládla smršť hip-hopu, Eminem zaspieval svoj megahit a pokľakol!* [online]. [2023-02-24]. Available at: <https://koktail.pravda.sk/z-obrazovky-i-spoza-nej/clanok/616802-super-bowl-ovladla-smrst-hip-hopu-eminem-zaspieval-svoj-megahit-a-poklakol/>; DOUGLAS, W.: *Na kolene proti rasizmu. Dumba pokľakol pri hymne.* [online]. [2023-02-24]. Available at: <https://www.nhl.com/sk/news/dumba-si-klakol-pri-hymne/c-317783224>.

31   *Packov syn, ktorému odobrali vodičák: Policajtov má v paži!* [online]. [2023-02-24]. Available at: <https://www.cas.sk/clanok/150884/pack-ov-syn-ktoremu-odobrali-vodicak-policajtov-ma-v-pa-zi/>; See also: *FOTO Slovenská herečka má predsudky v paži: Dieťa veselo dojčí na verejnosti!* [online]. [2023-02-24]. Available at: <https://www1.pluska.sk/soubiznis/domaci-soubiznis/foto-slovenska-herec-ka-ma-predsudky-pazi-dieta-veselo-dojci-verejnosti>; *Ako lízať med cez sklo: Loď so zásobami nedorazila na vesmírnu stanicu, už ju môžu iba fotiť!* [online]. [2023-02-24]. Available at: <https://www.cas.sk/clanok/315817/ako-lizat-med-cez-sklo-lod-so-zaso-bami-nedorazila-na-vesmirnu-stanicu-uz-ju-mozu-iba-fotit/>; *FOTO Internetom sa šíri šialená výzva: Rodičom musí šibať, aha, čo robia svojim bábätkám!* [online]. [2023-02-24]. Available at: <https://www1.pluska.sk/spravy/zo-zahranicia/foto-internetom-si-ri-sialena-vyzva-rodicom-musi-sibat-aha-co-robia-svo-jim-babatkam>.

32   MISTRÍK, J.: *Štylistika.* 4th Edition. Bratislava : VEDA, 2021, p. 127.

in them. Even in the mainstream, there are more news and articles that are closer to tabloids in their composition. The effort to attract, interest, entertain, arouse curiosity is becoming an integral part of journalism. And the choice of linguistic means in the press is certainly related to this. It is more typical of the colloquial style, the notionality of the expression or the entire message is suppressed, the expressiveness increases, and so does the quantity of idioms"[33]. The second difficulty related to increased frequency of idioms in the media space is related to either the wrong form of the idiom, the so-called by cross-links – by contaminating two idioms, or even by incorrect acquisition of the meaning. If a journalist does not know the correct meaning of an idiom, he will use it later in his text or speech in the wrong context. As for the incorrect acquisition of the meaning of an idiom by a journalist, in the past, for example, the borrowed idiom from English "to shed crocodile tears" was used incorrectly. The primary meaning is that if someone sheds crocodile tears, he is pretending to be sad. A secondary meaning, wrongly produced by incorrect interpretation, is that it is about great sorrow, big tears. In the older six-volume *Slovník slovenského*

jazyka[34] only following meaning of the idiom is defined: false and insincere. In *Krátky slovník slovenského jazyka*[35] the idiom is interpreted as to pretend sincere weeping, sadness. In the latest *Slovník súčasného slovenského jazyka*[36] both meanings are mentioned: a) pretend weeping, fake crying, and b) shed big tears. Here, however, the thesis that semiotics and its method of interpretation can generate multiple meanings of one idiom is fully developed. Even antonymous, contradictory. This only confirms that semiotics and phraseology have many lines in common and which are mutually unexplored.

Conclusion

Media semiotics represents one of the applied semiotics, which directly provides a way to clarify the origin and use of signs in human communication. Idioms provide an interesting connection between language and image, but also a sign in a wide range of meanings. It is indisputable that phraseology and semiotics have part of the theory and research field in mutual intersection. Their joint research within, for example, the mass media

space provides wide application possibilities for several fields of humanities.

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