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## CULTUREMES WITH ALLUSIONS TO LITERARY WORKS IN NEWSPAPER HEADLINES OF THREE SLAVIC LANGUAGES

Literature is essential in any national culture, serving as a crucial element that shapes and enriches a society's cultural identity, values, and worldview. By incorporating literary allusions into newspaper headlines, journalists can significantly enhance the depth and emotional appeal of a specific article, thereby increasing the headline's overall allure. Such headlines possess the potential to captivate readers and aid them in comprehending the text's intended meaning. Thus, they serve not only as a tool for conveying information but also as a means of transmitting values, attitudes, and identity. This study focuses on utilizing culturemes about literary works within the newspaper headlines of six selected online periodicals published in Russia, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. The analysis reveals that quotations, paraphrases, or various forms of references to literary works are employed in distinct ways across the newspaper headlines of various Slavic cultures. The research also contributes to a deeper understanding of how literature influences mass media language and demonstrates how specific literary elements manifest within media discourse.

Keywords: linguistic anthropology, language, culture, newspaper headline, literary work

### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND LANGUAGE AND CULTURE, LINGUISTIC ANTHROPOLOGY, CULTUREME

Since the 19th century, the issue of the relationship between language and culture has been one of the key concerns in world linguistics. The first attempts to address this problem are traced back to the works of the German thinker Wilhelm von Humboldt, who asserted, "There is nothing singular in language; each of its elements manifests itself only as a part of the whole."<sup>1</sup> He considered language to be "the world

<sup>1</sup> В. Гумбольдт, *Язык и философия культуры*, Прогресс, Москва 1985, p. 313 (transl. L. Gajarský).

lying between the world of external phenomena and the inner world of man.”<sup>2</sup> Humboldt’s concept was further developed in the works of Alexander Afanasyevich Potebnya, Roman Osipovich Jakobson, Charles Bally, Joseph Vendryes, Ivan Alexandrovich Baudouin de Courtenay, and others.

Franz Boas, a pioneer in linguistic anthropology, argued that all people perceive the world through the lens of their own culture and judge it based on their culturally internalized norms.<sup>3</sup> This perspective later influenced the development of the linguistic relativity hypothesis by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf, which posited that people view the world through the prism of their native language. According to Galina Vasilyevna Yelizarova, the theories of Boas, Sapir, and Whorf share three common elements: 1) a cognitive understanding of culture as a cognitive construct; 2) a theory of language that extends beyond the “language-speech” dichotomy, considering it an abstract system of linguistic unit dependencies; 3) a focus on static aspects of the relationship between language and culture, presenting language as a reflection of an objective, often physical and social, reality.<sup>4</sup>

For linguistic anthropology, there is the Russian term “linguo-culturology,” (лингвокультурология) and under similar names, it has become popular among linguists in other Slavic countries. Some contemporary scientists assert that language is a reflection of culture because it mirrors reality, and culture is an integral component of this reality (Yelena Yosifovna Kukushkina, Eduard Sarkisovich Markaryan, Nikolay Ivanovich Zhinkin, Georg Abelovich Brutyan, etc.). Zhinkin believes that language is an integral part of culture and a tool for expressing the spirit of our reality, the face of culture; it lays bare the specific features of national mentality. Language serves as a mechanism that opens up the realm of consciousness for humanity<sup>5</sup> and at the same time is also studied as a cognitive model.<sup>6</sup> According to Claude Lévi-Strauss, “language is both a product of culture and an essential constituent of it, as well as a prerequisite for the existence

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 304 (transl. L. Gajarský).

<sup>3</sup> J. D. Moore, *Visions of Culture: An Introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists*, Altamira, Walnut Creek 2012, p. 33–46.

<sup>4</sup> Г. В. Елизарова, *Культура и обучение иностранным языкам*, КАРО, Санкт-Петербург 2005, p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> Н. И. Жинкин, *Язык. Речь. Творчество*, Лабиринт, Москва 1998.

<sup>6</sup> Н. Ф. Алефиренко, Н. Б. Корина, *Проблемы когнитивной лингвистики*, УКФ в Нитре, Нитра 2011.

of culture. Moreover, language represents a distinct mode of cultural existence and plays a pivotal role in shaping cultural codes.”<sup>7</sup>

Language and culture are intrinsically linked to the mentality of the people, as highlighted by Nikolay Alefirenko’s definition:

Modern linguo-culturology is a scientific discipline that studies the ways and means of representing cultural objects in language, the idiosyncrasies of representing the mentality of different nations in language, and the patterns governing the representation of value-semantic categories of culture within the semantics of linguistic units.<sup>8</sup>

In his work *Essays on Ethnolinguistics*, Polish linguist Jerzy Bartmiński delves into the topic of national identity in culture and language.<sup>9</sup> According to Dmitriy Sergeyeovich Likhachev, language “serves as a concentrated embodiment of a nation’s culture within various segments of a given cultural and linguistic community.”<sup>10</sup> Consequently, it can be inferred that language and culture are multifaceted and interconnected phenomena, rooted in a communicative-activity and value-based foundation, which accumulates human experience. As Vladimir Il’ich Karasik rightly observed: “language and culture stand as the most fundamental concepts in humanitarian knowledge. The social essence of language primarily resides within linguistic consciousness — both collective and individual. Therefore, language collectives, on one hand, and individuals, on the other hand, serve as carriers of culture within language.”<sup>11</sup>

The term “linguo-culturology” emerged in Russian linguistics in the final decade of the 20th century and is associated with the works of Veronika Nikolayevna Teliya, Vladimir Vasil’evich Vorob’yev, Yuriy Sergeyeovich Stepanov, Nina Davidovna Arutyunova, Viktor Mikhaylovich Shaklein, Valentina Avraamovna Maslova, Viktoriya Vladimirovna Krasnykh, Vladimir Il’ich Karasik, Vladimir Viktorovich Kolesov, Yevgeniy Mikhaylovich Vereshchagin, Sergey Grigor’yevich Vorkachev, and others.

<sup>7</sup> В. А. Маслова, *Лингвокультурология*, Академия, Москва 2001, p. 62 (transl. L. Gajarský).

<sup>8</sup> Н. Ф. Алефиренко, *Лингвокультурология: ценностно-смысловое пространство языка. Учебное пособие*, Флинта, Москва 2010, p. 21 (transl. L. Gajarský).

<sup>9</sup> Е. Бартоми́нский, *Языковой образ мира. Очерки по этнолингвистике*, ed. С.М. Толстая, Индрик, Москва 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Д. С. Лихачев, *Очерки по философии художественного творчества*, БЛИЦ, Санкт-Петербург 1996, p. 28 (transl. L. Gajarský).

<sup>11</sup> В. И. Карасик, *Языковой круг: личность, концепты, дискурс*, Перемена, Волгоград 2002, p. 8 (transl. L. Gajarský).

Common definitions of this scientific discipline emphasize its synthetic nature as it investigates the relationship and interaction between culture and language in their functioning, in other words it integrates linguistic and extralinguistic (cultural) content using systematic methods.<sup>12</sup>

The primary challenge within this branch of linguistics is defining its units of study. Russian scholars propose concepts such as “cultureme,” “concept,” “logoepisteme,” “cultural concept,” “lingosapi-enteme,” and others. In this paper, we will work with the concept of “cultureme” — a unit within the linguistic anthropology field that encompasses the fusion of a sign, meaning, and correlative concept about a class of cultural objects.<sup>13</sup>

### TITLE, FUNCTIONS, CULTUREME IN THE HEADLINE

Culturemes have become a distinguishing feature of various discourses, particularly in media discourse, where they are actively employed in newspaper headlines. Interest in the study of headlines dates back to the 1950s, notably with the work of Lev Semënovich Vygotskiy. Linguistically, a headline represents the text’s title, while semiotically, it serves as the initial sign of the text. Within the meaningful structure of a work, the title plays a unique role as an organizing element that encapsulates the primary theme. The headline captures readers’ attention to the article; in a way, it serves as a “condensed abbreviation” for it.<sup>14</sup>

As Il’ya Romanovich Gal’perin describes it, the title is “the compressed, undisclosed content of the text, akin to a coiled spring that gradually reveals its potential during the unfolding process.”<sup>15</sup> Various speech strategies and tactics are realized in them too.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> В. В. Воробьев, *Лингвокультурология: Монография*, РУДН, Москва 2008, p. 37.

<sup>13</sup> Е. И. Зиновьева, *Лингвокультурология: от теории к практике. Учебник*, СПбГУ, Санкт-Петербург 2016.

<sup>14</sup> О. Е. Ермачкова, *Лингвокультурологический потенциал блог-дискурса*, Издательский дом БелГУ, Белгород 2021, p. 32.

<sup>15</sup> И. Р. Гальперин, *Текст как объект лингвистического исследования*, Наука, Москва 1981, p. 133 (transl. L. Gajarský).

<sup>16</sup> Я. Галло, *Коммуникация в вербальном тексте, вербальный текст в коммуникации*, “Studia Rossica Posnaniensia” 2019, no. 44(1), p. 309–318. and Я. Галло, *Некоторые лексические и синтаксические реализации речевых стратегий и тактик в медиа-дискурсе (на материале русской и словацкой прессы)*, “Jazyk a kultura” 2019, no. 39–40, p. 9–21.

The headline serves multiple functions, functioning as an activator of nearly all textual categories: modality (emotional assessment); informativeness (naming the text based on one of its topics); completeness (distinguishing one text from another); coherence (through recurring elements throughout the text); conceptuality (conveying the main idea of the work); and prospection (meeting the reader's expectations).<sup>17</sup> In this context, we can observe an effort towards emotionality, expressive assessment, text intellectualization, and broader manifestations of linguistic innovations as well.<sup>18</sup> In contemporary mass media, persuasive and manipulative functions are beginning to prevail over informative function.<sup>19</sup>

In the case of headlines featuring culturemes, the primary function is advertising or intrigue, which is evident in the author's desire to maximize the reader's engagement with their publication, to captivate them with a catchy, intriguing, and at times empathetic title. The title becomes a means of expressive self-expression for the author, making the text more easily digestible and fulfilling a compositional role.

The use of culturemes with references to literary works in media headlines is not accidental; it introduces fresh layers of meaning and creates a humorous effect. In this context, Nikolay Alefirenko discusses the "value-sense space of language", which, in his view, forms the foundation of "linguo-culturology".<sup>20</sup>

Adam Yevgen'yevich Suprun highlights that well-known text fragments, or even entire texts, are often intentionally or unintentionally integrated into new texts. This is done with the belief that these incorporations will improve the communication of ideas in the new text, leading to better understanding and increased effectiveness.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> В. А. Кухаренко, *Интерпретация текста*, Латстар, Одесса 2002, p. 90–101.

<sup>18</sup> A. Spišiaková, O. E. Iermachkova, *Semantic transformations of phraseological units in Russian and Slovak newspaper articles*, "Филологические науки: научные доклады высшей школы" 2022, no. 5, p. 12–14; A. Spišiaková, *Structural-semantic transformations of phraseological units in Russian and Slovak newspaper articles*, "SKASE Journal of Theoretical Linguistics" 2022, no. 1, vol. 19, p. 96.

<sup>19</sup> N. Cingerová, I. Dulebová, *Jazyk a konflikt. My a tí druhí v ruskom verejnom diskurze*, Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave, Bratislava 2019, p. 165.

<sup>20</sup> Н. Ф. Алефиренко, *Лингвокультурология: ценностно-смысловое пространство языка...*

<sup>21</sup> А. Е. Супрун, *Текстовые реминисценции как языковое явление*, "Вопросы языкознания" 1995, no. 6, p. 17.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND ADDENDUM

Literary allusions stem from the deep psychological connection of the Russian people with the written word, primarily associated with Russian literature.<sup>22</sup> One characteristic of Russian culture is its focus on literature, so-called “literaturocentricity.”

The link between language and literature presents several cultural arguments. From Ancient Rus through the 19th century, Russian literature held a prominent position in culture. Cultural scholar Igor’ Kondakov asserts that “we can speak of a metahistorical attribute of Russian culture known as focusing on literature — a consistent gravitational pull of the culture as a whole toward literary and verbal forms of self-representation.”<sup>23</sup> Among the key factors contributing to this phenomenon, the scholar identifies the distinct type of Russian mentality connected with the vitality of language, the course of cultural and historical developments, the outcomes of intercultural exchanges with the West and the East, Russia’s unique historical experiences, which nurtured the formation of verbal self-awareness within Russian culture, and the inherent richness and expressiveness of the Russian language, enabling the verbal conveyance of grand ideas and images.<sup>24</sup> Literature is portrayed as a semantic and/or cultural model.<sup>25</sup> The apprehension of an artistic text in its presentation empowers the recipient to autonomously form novel semantic connections, leading to communicative success through the adaptability of imagination.<sup>26</sup>

The incorporation of literary references, a traditional element of Russian national consciousness, represents an important tool for conceptualizing, categorizing, and assessing reality in modern print media. It also contributes to the personalization of media discourse as a form of institutional communication.

The inclination of publicists to employ allusions to works of fiction in their texts reaffirms the significance of literature and its esteemed position in contemporary culture. The growing interest in linguistic

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> И. Кондаков, *По ту сторону слова*, “Вопросы литературы” 2008, no. 5, p. 5–44 (transl. L. Gajarský).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> A. Grominová, O. V. Medukha, *Underground poetry of the 70s in the course of Russian as a foreign language*, “Philological class” 2022, no. 1 (27), p. 223.

<sup>26</sup> A. Grominová, O. V. Medukha, *The Image of Light in the Poetry of Olga Sedakova*, “Mundo Eslavo” 2022, no 21, p. 98.

anthropology, the exploration of the connection between language and culture, and the issues surrounding national language and cultural spaces in recent decades underscore the pertinence of these problems.

**RESEARCH MATERIAL AND METHODS USED  
NEWSPAPER HEADLINES COMPOSED OF CULTUREMES  
REFERENCING A LITERARY WORK**

Mass media texts are undoubtedly a preferred subject of study in the field of linguistics and its related disciplines, including linguistic anthropology. The language found in media texts often can mirror the culture of a specific society, a trait that becomes even more conspicuous in newspaper headlines, as they represent a concentrated form of mass media communication. Their power to persuade, and particularly their potential to shape public opinion and attitudes, should not be underestimated.

The foundational thesis upon which this study is built posits that the contemporary language's image is chiefly constructed by the language used in mass media and everyday conversation. One of the hypotheses also centers on deliberately using cultural elements to accentuate specific qualities in newspaper headlines. Thus, we hypothesize that journalists employ cultural elements in headline creation to capture the reader's attention, evoke emotions, influence their opinions, and so on.

In this research, we zeroed in on the utilization of culturemes concerning literary works, selecting this particular subject based on the hypothesis that literary works, being a vital component of culture, provide a vast resource for journalistic creativity, owing to their diversity and wide availability. In newspaper headlines, these preceding texts, in both their literal and implied meanings, catalyze eliciting a wide array of associations, contributing to the reflection of the linguistic worldview that is inherent in each culture.

Our hypothesis is corroborated by Karel Kosik's assertion that the life of a literary work resides "in the mutual interaction between the work and humanity."<sup>27</sup> In our perspective, the existence of a literary work does not conclude with its consumption by the audience; instead, its ideas continue to evolve and find expression in various forms.

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<sup>27</sup> M. Jankovič, *Cesty za smyslem literárního díla*, Univerzita Karlova v Praze, Praha 2005, p. 28 (transl. L. Gajarský).



The research material comprises newspaper headlines from popular Russian (Kommersant (K), Argumenty i fakty (AIF)), Slovak (Plus 1 Den (P1D), Trend (T)), and Czech (Lidove noviny (LN), Respekt (R)) online periodicals of a similar genre and with comparable readership bases.

The reason for choosing these periodicals is that they are journalistic texts of a similar genre, and they also belong to the most widely read newspapers in the countries of their origin. The excerpt was conducted over six months, from January 1, 2020, to June 30, 2020, through purposive sampling from 9,060 Slovak headlines, 9,582 Czech headlines, and 7,656 Russian headlines. All newspaper headlines containing any reference to a literary work were selected from the periodicals as mentioned above during the specified period. The quantitative characteristics are presented in the research results and discussion section of the study.

The aim of this research is not solely to statistically identify the number of culturemes referencing literary works in the newspaper headlines of the selected periodicals. It also seeks to understand the intention behind their use in supporting the various functions of newspaper headlines. The transformations of specific expressions, which are a focal point of this study, are likewise connected to this goal. Based on the findings, distinct characteristics of each of the three cultures under examination are determined. In the final stage, the results within these specific cultures are compared.

The English translation by the authors of this paper is given in brackets after the excerpts.

## NEWSPAPER HEADLINES — RUSSIAN PERIODICALS

In the newspaper headline *Без Винды виноватые*,<sup>28</sup> there is an unmistakable reference to the title of the four-act comedy *Без вины виноватые* (Guilty without fault), written by Aleksandr Nikolayevich Ostrovskiy. Through the lexical transformation of the title using slang, the author has crafted an intriguing linguistic play. The objective is to capture the reader's attention while also offering partial insight into the article's content. In the article, the author discusses the necessity of migrating to a higher version of the Windows

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4220266> (15.01.2020).



operating system, highlighting the potential threat to the banking system if this isn't done. Additionally, it underscores the legal obligation imposed on the banking sector.

Lexical transformation using substandard language also plays a significant role in the subtitle *Многоуважаемый шкаф*<sup>29</sup> (Most Respected Skaf), where there is a clear allusion to Gayev's words from Anton Pavlovich Chekhov's play *The Cherry Orchard*, in which he addresses a century-old cupboard with the words "Дорогой, Многоуважаемый шкаф!" (Dear, Most Respected Cupboard!). The subtitle becomes more engaging for the reader, while also carrying elements of irony and providing information. It serves as the heading for an article about a corruption case involving the deputy chief of military missions of the RF Ministry of Defence in connection with spacesuit testing.

The author of the headline *Полторы двери в полторы комнаты*<sup>30</sup> (One and a Half Doors into One and a Half Rooms) has skillfully transformed Brodsky's essay title, "*Полторы комнаты*" (One and a Half Rooms). By expanding the expression, they have added emotionality and, remarkably, conveyed information about the article's content. The article is dedicated to an unfinished museum in honor of the Nobel Prize for Literature laureate Brodsky.

A hint of irony is discernible in the newspaper headline *И Dream Отечества нам сладок и приятен*<sup>31</sup> (And the Dream of the Motherland is Sweet and Pleasant to Us), where the author has performed lexical transformation on a quote from Aleksandr Sergeyevich Griboyedov's satirical comedy *Горе от ума* (The Sorrows of Reason). In the original text, Chatsky, upon returning from abroad, sarcastically comments on the old Muscovites, saying, "...И дым отечества нам сладок и приятен"<sup>32</sup> (...and the smoke of the fatherland is sweet and pleasant to us). Chatsky's sarcasm is carried over into contemporary newspaper headlines and amplified by the use of the English word "Dream." In the article, the author writes about Vladimir Putin's visit to the "Остров мечты" (The Dream Island) amusement park and the keen interest of those present in taking a joint photograph with

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4260001> (19.02.2020).

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4250166> (10.02.2020).

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4269431> (27.02.2020).

<sup>32</sup> It should be noted that the phrase Aleksandr Griboyedov probably took it from Gavriil Derzhavin's poem *Нарп* ([https://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/dic\\_wingwords/988/%D0%98](https://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/dic_wingwords/988/%D0%98) (07.10.2023)).

the President. The guide accompanying the journalists explained that all the fairy-tale attractions had Russian origins and answered the author's questions about characters like Mowgli, Smurfs, and Ninja Turtles by noting that the mentioned stories were later written in Russia as well.

Additional lines from Chatsky in Griboyedov's comedy *The Sorrows of Reason* were employed by the author in the caption "Служить не рад? Почему Грибоедов не ценил дипломатическую работу"<sup>33</sup> (Not Happy to Serve? Why Didn't Griboyedov Appreciate Diplomatic Work). The abbreviation of the expression "Служить бы рад, прислуживаться тошно" ("I Would Be Glad to Serve; It's Smarming That's Sickening"), along with its syntactic transformation, imparts an engaging and slightly evaluative quality to the subtitle, while also providing insight into the article's content, which is dedicated to Griboyedov.

The title *Рим во время чумы*<sup>34</sup> (Rome During the Plague) acquires an emotional character due to the lexical transformation of the tragedy *Пир во время чумы* (A Feast in Time of Plague), which Aleksandr Pushkin wrote during his most creative period known as the Boldin Autumn. In Boldin, Pushkin stayed for several months because, at that time, a cholera epidemic broke out in Russia, which he referred to as the plague. The mentioned title leads the reader to a text about an exhibition of Raphael's work at the Scuderie del Quirinale in Rome, organized on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of his death. However, crowds of visitors did not appear, and the anticipated glory was disrupted by the coronavirus epidemic.

The pandemic of the coronavirus is related to an article with the headline *В очередь, Родины дети, в очередь*<sup>35</sup> (*In Line, Children of the Motherland, in Line*). Slight irony is added to it by the lexical transformation of the phrase "В очередь, сукины дети, в очередь!" ("In Line, You Sons of Bitches, in Line") from Mikhail Afanas'yevich Bulgakov's story *Собачье сердце* (Dog's Heart). The newspaper text informs the reader about the development of a concept to allow the return of Russian citizens who got stuck abroad due to the closure of borders because of the pandemic.

<sup>33</sup> [https://aif.ru/society/history/sluzhit\\_ne\\_rad\\_pochemu\\_griboedov\\_ne\\_cenil\\_diplomaticheskuyu\\_rabotu](https://aif.ru/society/history/sluzhit_ne_rad_pochemu_griboedov_ne_cenil_diplomaticheskuyu_rabotu) (15.01.2020).

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4284211> (03.12.2020).

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4317272> (08.04.2020).

In the title *И днём и ночью код... Как совершать поездки по Москве до 11 мая?*<sup>36</sup> (Day and Night Code... How to Make Trips in Moscow Until May 11) there is a clear reference to the excerpt “У лукоморья дуб зелёный” (There’s a green oak by the edge of the sea), which is part of Pushkin’s poem *Руслан и Людмила* (Ruslan and Lyudmila). Lexical transformation and reduction of the expression “...И днём и ночью кот учёный...” (...and day and night, the scholarly cat...) help the headline grab the reader’s attention and guide them to an article about the quarantine arrangements in Moscow, where movement and travel in the city are allowed only for those people assigned a special code, those whose work requires their physical presence.

By a lexical transformation of Arkadiy Petrovich Gaidar’s story *Тимур и его команда* (Timur and His Team), the title *Ротенберг и его команда. Президент наградил строителей Крымского моста*<sup>37</sup> (Rotenberg and His Team. The President Awarded the Builders of the Crimean Bridge) acquires an emotional tone. The article provides information about the results of the enormous work in building the Crimean Bridge and its recognition by President V. Putin.

In the headline *Один день Павла Фитина. Почему Сталин не поверил начальнику разведки?*<sup>38</sup> (One Day of Pavel Fitin. Why Didn’t Stalin Believe the Head of Intelligence?) the author made a lexical transformation of the title of a literary work. In this case, it refers to the title of Aleksandr Isayevich Solzhenitsyn’s short story *Один день Ивана Денисовича* (One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich), giving the headline more emotional impact and captivation. The article provides insights into the life of a spy during the Great Patriotic War period.

In Russian periodicals, headlines were often composed using culturemes referring to literary works. Over a six-month period, we managed to excerpt 216 such headlines, with 155 from the newspaper “Kommersant” and 61 from the weekly “Argumenty i fakty.” These culturemes were expressed not only through the titles of literary

<sup>36</sup> [https://aif.ru/moscow/i\\_dnyom\\_i\\_nochyu\\_kod\\_kak\\_overshat\\_poezdki\\_po\\_moskve\\_do\\_11\\_maya](https://aif.ru/moscow/i_dnyom_i_nochyu_kod_kak_overshat_poezdki_po_moskve_do_11_maya) (06.05.2020).

<sup>37</sup> [https://aif.ru/politics/russia/rotenberg\\_i\\_ego\\_komanda\\_prezident\\_nagradil\\_stroiteley\\_krymskogo\\_mosta](https://aif.ru/politics/russia/rotenberg_i_ego_komanda_prezident_nagradil_stroiteley_krymskogo_mosta) (25.03.2020).

<sup>38</sup> [https://aif.ru/society/history/odin\\_den\\_pavla\\_fitina\\_pochemu\\_stalin\\_ne\\_poveril\\_nachalniku\\_razvedki](https://aif.ru/society/history/odin_den_pavla_fitina_pochemu_stalin_ne_poveril_nachalniku_razvedki) (17.06.2020).

works but also through onyms or quotes, which were often transformed in various ways. In the headlines, they primarily served their emotional and advertising function.

### NEWSPAPER HEADLINES — SLOVAK PERIODICALS

The headline *VOĽBY 2020 Vzostupy a pády Andreja Kisku: Nádejný premiér či Ficov nepriateľ číslo jeden!*<sup>39</sup> (ELECTIONS 2020 Rises and Falls of Andrej Kiska: Promising Prime Minister or Fico's Number One Enemy!) evokes interesting associations. It contains an allusion to the biography *Rises and Falls* (with the subtitle *Gustav Husak Spoke*) written by Viliam Plevza. By expanding the title of the biography to include the name of the former President of Slovakia, the headline takes on an ironic twist, enticing the reader to explore the life of Andrej Kiska.

A hint of irony is also evident in the headline *Veľký návrat! S Beblavým zakladal Spolu, to pohorelo. Mihál ide naspäť k Sulíkovi do SaS!*<sup>40</sup> (The Big Return! With Beblavý, the Political Party “Together” Was Founded, But It Failed. Mihal Goes Back to Sulik in SaS!). It is a semantic transformation of the book title *Veľký návrat* (The Big Return), by Zuzana Palovic composed of 58 stories of people who, after spending part of their lives abroad, returned to Slovakia. The newspaper article, however, narrates a political story about Jozef Mihal.

The lexical transformation of A. J. Kazinski's detective novel *Poslední dobrý muž* (The Last Good Man) serves the headline *Posledný dobrý rok. Ako dokázali banky vlani navýšiť zisk!*<sup>41</sup> (The Last Good Year. How Banks Managed to Increase Profits Last Year) and primarily enhances its emotional and advertising function, guiding the reader to an article about the financial review of the past year in the banking sector.

The headline *Príbeh pokračuje! Internet šalie: FOTO ako dôkaz, že Aniston skončila v posteli s Pittom?*<sup>42</sup> (The Story Continues!

<sup>39</sup> <https://www1.pluska.sk/spravy/z-domova/volby-2020-vzostupy-pady-andreja-kisku-nadejny-premier-ficov-nepriatel-cislo-jeden-2/5> (19.01.2020).

<sup>40</sup> <https://www1.pluska.sk/spravy/z-domova/velky-navrat-beblavym-zakladal-spolu-to-pohorelo-mihal-ide-naspat-sulikovi-sas> (09.03.2020).

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.trend.sk/trend-archiv/posledny-dobry-rok-ako-dokazali-banky-vlani-navysit-zisk> (17.02.2020).

<sup>42</sup> <https://www1.pluska.sk/spravy/zo-zahranicia/pribeh-pokracuje-internet-salie-foto-ako-dokaz-aniston-skoncila-posteli-pittom> (21.01.2020).

The Internet Goes Crazy: PHOTO as Proof that Aniston Ended up in Bed with Pitt?) grabs the reader's attention while showing a clear reduction of the title of the bestselling book "Všetko alebo nič: Príbeh pokračuje" (Everything or Nothing: The Story Continues) by Eva Urbanikova. The article under the headline speculates about the rekindling of love between former spouses, Hollywood stars Jennifer Aniston and Brad Pitt.

The title of Ernest Hemingway's novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is semantically transformed in the newspaper headline *Komu zvonía do hrobu? Tomu, kto zaspal dobu*<sup>43</sup> (For Whom the Bell Tolls? To the One Who Has Overslept the Era). The headline carries evaluative and promotional characteristics, aiming to capture the reader's interest. It leads to an article evaluating the construction of the Bratislava Polus shopping center and highlighting its architectural stagnation.

A fictional character representing a totalitarian regime, created by George Orwell in the novel *1984*, is mentioned in the headline *Toto nás môže zachrániť pred ďalšou koronou: Veľkého brata naučili predvídať vírusové epidémie*<sup>44</sup> (This Can Save Us from Another Corona: Big Brother Has Been Taught to Predict Viral Epidemics) adding a touch of irony. The article discusses a device capable of monitoring people in a crowd, detecting coughing, and predicting potential epidemic outbreaks based on the data collected.

The reduction and lexical transformation of the title of Samuel Beckett's absurd drama *Waiting for Godot* results in the headline *Čakanie na nového premiéra. Politická zmena príde, nech bude výsledok akýkoľvek*<sup>45</sup> (Waiting for a New Prime Minister. Political change will come, no matter the outcome). This headline adds a certain emotional aspect and offers the reader a summary of post-election expectations.

The title of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's novel *Love in the Time of Cholera* is lexically transformed in the newspaper headline *Gastro v čase korony: Donášku už robia prakticky všetci*<sup>46</sup> (Gastro in the Time of the Corona: Delivery is Now Done by Practically Everyone),

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.trend.sk/trend-archiv/komu-zvonía-hrobu-tomu-kto-zaspal-dobu> (24.02.2020).

<sup>44</sup> <https://plus7dni.pluska.sk/auto-a-hi-tech/toto-nas-moze-zachranit-pred-dalsou-koronou-velkeho-brata-naucili-predvidat-virusove-epidemie> (14.04.2020).

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.trend.sk/trend-archiv/cakanie-noveho-premiera-politicka-zmena-pride-nech-bude-vysledok-akykolvek> (27.02.2020).

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.trend.sk/trend-archiv/gastro-case-korony-donasku-robia-prakticky-vsetci> (28.04.2020).

giving it an emotional tone. The article describes how the coronavirus crisis has affected dining and lodging services.

Lexical transformation of Marquez's novel *Love in the Time of Cholera* is also evident in the headline *Maturity v čase korony. Vy-svedčenia maturantov budú skôr*<sup>47</sup> (School Leaving Exams During the Time of the Pandemic. High School Diplomas for Graduates Will be Issued Sooner), emphasizing its emotional function. The article informs that traditional graduation exams will not take place in that year, and students will be evaluated based on the average of their annual marks for a specific subject from all school years and half-year marks from the last two years.

The emotional function dominates in the headline *Otvoriť či neotvorit? Koalícia súčasným prokuátorom neverí*<sup>48</sup> (To Open or Not to Open? The Coalition Doesn't Trust the Current Prosecutors), where we can observe the lexical transformation of Shakespeare's legendary phrase "To be or not to be..." from his drama "Hamlet." The reference to the world-famous phrase adds an emotional touch to the headline, and the article evaluates the challenging situation within the current prosecution.

In Slovak periodicals, authors do not frequently use references to literary works in creating newspaper headlines. Over six months, we excerpted 21 headlines created with such cultural elements. We selected 7 from the "Plus 1 Den" daily and 14 from the "Trend" weekly, with most of them primarily supporting their emotional and promotional functions.

## NEWSPAPER HEADLINES — CZECH PERIODICALS

The lexical transformation of the title of one of the ballads from Karel Jaromír Erben's collection *Kytice* (A Bouquet) called *Záhořovo lože* (Záhoř's Bed) highlights irony and thus supports the emotional and advertising function of the newspaper headline "*ZVĚŘINA: Rathovo lože. Státní zástupci zajišťují i nepohodlí odsouzeným*."<sup>49</sup> (*ZVĚŘINA:*

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.trend.sk/trend-archiv/maturity-case-korony-vysvedcania-maturantov-budskor-2> (03.05.2020).

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.trend.sk/trend-archiv/otvorit-neotvorit-koalicia-sucasnym-prokuratorom-neveri> (05.06.2020).

<sup>49</sup> [https://www.lidovky.cz/nazory/zverina-rathovo-loze-statni-zastupci-zajistuji-i-nepohodli-odsouzenym.A200106\\_210007\\_in\\_nazory\\_ele](https://www.lidovky.cz/nazory/zverina-rathovo-loze-statni-zastupci-zajistuji-i-nepohodli-odsouzenym.A200106_210007_in_nazory_ele) (07.01.2020).



Rath's Bed. Public prosecutors also ensure discomfort for the convicted), which is the title of an article dedicated to the case of the convicted Czech politician David Rath, who in prison unjustly used the benefits of his orthopedic mattress.

The headline *RECENZE: Bídníci. Mladíci pěstují revoltu, ze které se může poučit i policie*<sup>50</sup> (REVIEW: Les Misérables. Young men nurture a revolt from which the police can learn) attempts to capture the reader's attention with a reference to the title of Victor Hugo's novel *Bídníci (Les Misérables)*. As the title suggests, the article is a review of the eponymous French film, which received an Oscar nomination.

In the newspaper headline *PETRÁČEK: Ruka sladké Francii. Česko si konečně dopřalo gesto evropské solidarity*<sup>51</sup> (PETRÁČEK: A Hand to Sweet France. The Czech Republic Finally Allows an Act of European Solidarity), there is a noticeable allusion to the collection of treasures of French folk poetry hidden in the chansons of unknown authors, titled *Zpěvy sladké Francie (Songs of Sweet France)*, which was translated into Czech by the philosopher, translator, and literary scientist Hanuš Jelínek. Through the lexical and morphological transformation of the collection's title, the author adds a slight hint of irony to the headline. The article further informs about the generous gesture of the Czech Republic towards France, significantly affected by the coronavirus pandemic. The Czech Republic offered to admit six seriously ill French patients and assist in their treatment. The author ironically writes that the patients did not eventually arrive because the French managed without Czech help, but the gesture sent towards the EU is still appreciated.

It is no coincidence that the author used the headline *Poslední slovo Karla Olivy: Vojna a vir*<sup>52</sup> (The Last Word of Karel Oliva: War and Turbulence) to refer to a novel by a Russian author. Through the lexical transformation of the title of Lev Tolstoy's novel *Война u мup (War and Peace)*, the author managed to give the headline an emotional nuance. In the article, he analyzes the Russian word "мир" ("peace") and its semantics in an interesting way.

<sup>50</sup> [https://www.lidovky.cz/orientace/kultura/recenze-bidnici-mladici-pestuji-revoltu-ze-ktere-se-muze-poucit-i-policie.A200129\\_093621\\_in\\_kultura\\_jto?galerie](https://www.lidovky.cz/orientace/kultura/recenze-bidnici-mladici-pestuji-revoltu-ze-ktere-se-muze-poucit-i-policie.A200129_093621_in_kultura_jto?galerie) (30.01.2020).

<sup>51</sup> [https://www.lidovky.cz/nazory/petracek-ruka-sladke-francii-cesko-si-konecne-doprало-gesto-evropske-solidarity.A200406\\_195620\\_in\\_nazory\\_rkj](https://www.lidovky.cz/nazory/petracek-ruka-sladke-francii-cesko-si-konecne-doprало-gesto-evropske-solidarity.A200406_195620_in_nazory_rkj) (07.04.2020).

<sup>52</sup> [https://www.lidovky.cz/nazory/posledni-slovo-karla-olivy-vojna-a-vir.A200429\\_203323\\_in\\_nazory\\_tmr](https://www.lidovky.cz/nazory/posledni-slovo-karla-olivy-vojna-a-vir.A200429_203323_in_nazory_tmr) (30.04.2020).



The reference to Frantisek Niedl's book *Čas vlků* (Time of Wolves) enhances the advertising function of the newspaper headline *Čas vlků*<sup>53</sup> (Time of Wolves). The author attempts to capture the reader's attention and offers a review of a Swedish crime novel by Niklas Natt Dag titled *Vlk a dráb* (Wolf and Rascal).

An interesting linguistic play is found in the headline *Hra o jedno křeslo – Senátoři se přou o to, kdo má být jejich novým předsedou*<sup>54</sup> (Game for One Seat – Senators Argue Over Who Should Be Their New Chairman). The author added a touch of irony by referencing the world-famous fantasy novel *Hra o trůny* (A Game of Thrones) by American author George Raymond Richard Martin. The article informs about the election of a new Senate chairman due to the previous one's passing.

Irony is noticeable in the headline *Přísnost musí bejt*<sup>55</sup> (Strictness Must Be), in which the author has reduced one of the famous sayings: "Já uznávám všechno, přísnost musí bejt, bez přísnosti by se nikdo nikam nedostal..." ("I recognize everything; there must be strictness, without strictness, no one would get anywhere...") from Jaroslav Hašek's novel *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka* (The Good Soldier Švejk). The article is a commentary on the absurd situation where responsibilities for handling offenses are tossed back and forth between KRNAP (The Krkonose National Park Management) and the Czech Police during a state of emergency.

Syntactic transformation of the book title about problem-solving in relationships, *Blízko a přece tak daleko* (Close, Yet So Far), written by Steven Carter and Julia Sokolová, emphasizes the emotional aspect in the headline *Na dálku, a přece blízko?*<sup>56</sup> (From a Distance, and Yet Close?). The author, who is the director of the Cesta domů hospice (Journeying Home), describes a day in the hospice during the pandemic.

The newspaper headline *Lesk a bída nejistoty*<sup>57</sup> (The Splendor and the Poverty of Uncertainty) is a linguistic play created by the lexical transformation of Honoré de Balzac's novel *Lesk a bída kurtizán*

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.respekt.cz/tydenik/2020/1/cas-vlku> (29.12.2019).

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.respekt.cz/tydenik/2020/7/hra-o-jedno-kreslo?issueId=100440> (09.02.2020).

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.respekt.cz/tydenik/2020/15/prisnost-musi-bejt?issueId=100450> (05.04.2020).

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.respekt.cz/tydenik/2020/16/na-dalku-a-prece-blizko?issueId=100451> (12.04.2020).

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.respekt.cz/tydenik/2020/19/lesk-a-bida-nejistoty?issueId=100454> (03.05.2020).

(*Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*). The author of the article aims to draw the reader’s attention to a psychological perspective on uncertainty during the pandemic.

The emotional and advertising function of the headline *Vystrčilova volba*<sup>58</sup> (Vystrčil’s Choice) is underscored by the lexical transformation of the title of William Styron’s psychological novel *Sophii-na volba* (Sophie’s Choice). In the article, the author introduces the three most prominent figures in Czech politics: Miloš Zeman, Andrej Babiš, and Miloš Vystrčil.

In Czech periodicals, linguistic-cultural references to literary works were frequently used in headline creation. Over six months, we extracted 241 such headlines, with 138 from *Lidové noviny* and 103 from *Respekt*. However, the examined headlines in Czech periodicals did not stand out for their originality and primarily served a nominative-informative and emotional function.

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The parallel excerpts, spanning half a year, showed that references to literary works are employed in the creation of subtitles. Simultaneously, they unveiled significant differences within the three linguistic cultures under study. Over the period, we extracted a total of 478 newspaper headlines composed of cultural references to literary works. We managed to collect 216 headlines from Russian periodicals, 21 from Slovak, and 241 from Czech sources, all meeting the requirements for our research. The numbers and percentages are presented in Table 1 and Figure 1.

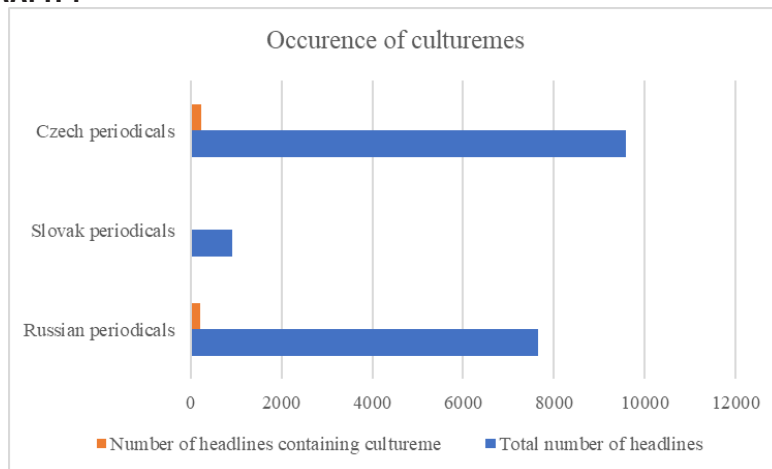
**TABLE 1**

Newspaper headlines	Total number of headlines	Number of headlines containing cultureme	Occurrence of culturemes (in %)
Russian periodicals	7,656	216	2,82
Slovak periodicals	9,060	21	0,23
Czech periodicals	9,582	241	2,52

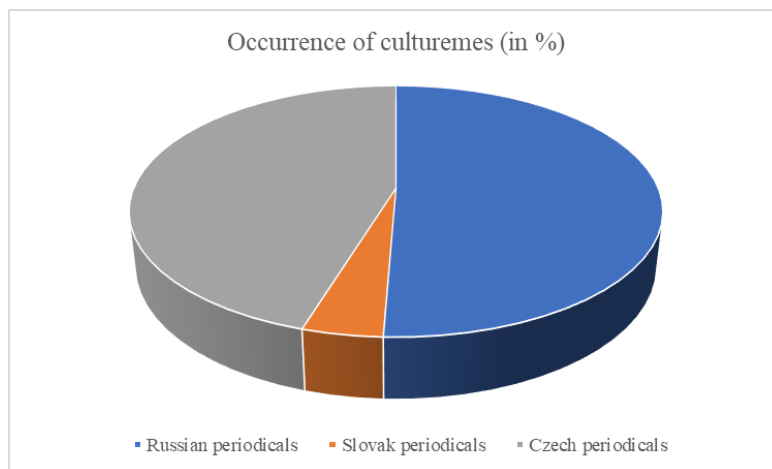
<sup>58</sup> <https://www.respekt.cz/tydenik/2020/25/vystrcilova-volba> (14.06.2020).

## CULTUREMES WITH ALLUSIONS TO LITERARY WORKS...

**GRAPH 1**



**GRAPH 2**



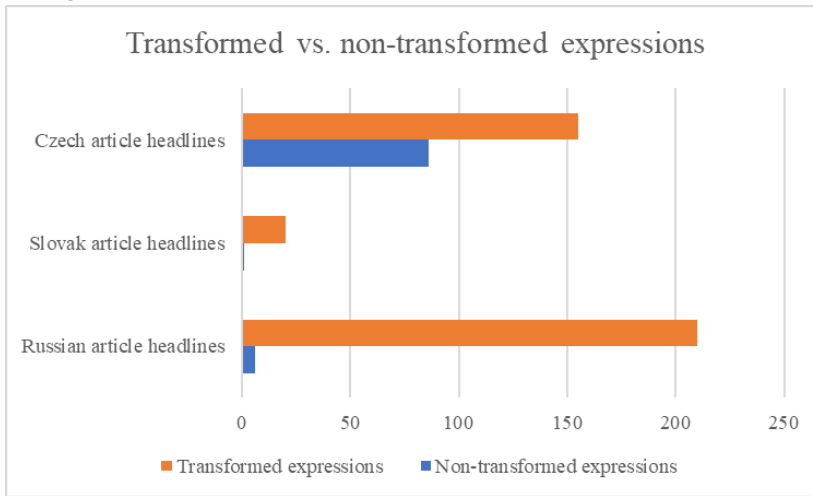
The aforementioned statistical results are followed by research into the transformation of individual terms in newspaper headlines. The authors adopted this approach to modify expressions with the intention of creating a linguistic game that can emphasize particular features of newspaper headlines. In addition to enhancing attractiveness to capture the reader's attention, this method can also intensify the evaluative, emotive, expressive, persuasive, and other characteristics of the headline.

An overview of the number of transformed expressions in the examined newspaper headlines can be found in Table 2, while Graph 3 displays the ratio of transformed to non-transformed expressions.

**TABLE 2**

	Russian article headlines	Slovak article headlines	Czech article headlines
Non-transformed expressions	6	1	86
Transformed expressions	210	20	155
Total	216	21	241
Transformed expressions in %	97,22	95,24	64,32

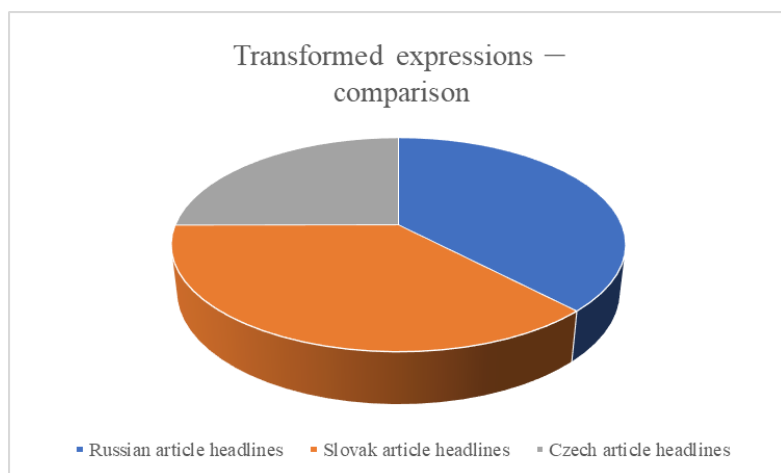
**GRAPH 3**



The research demonstrates that newspaper headline writers use references to literary works to craft a linguistic play aimed at capturing the reader’s attention. Furthermore, the semantics of these culturemes aids in enhancing the expressiveness of the headlines. The most common methods of modifying individual expressions include lexical transformation, reduction or expansion of the utterance, and grammatical, especially morphological, alterations. However, the creation of various puzzles is contingent upon a certain perspective within the target audience. This implies that when constructing a language game through the application of a literary work reference,

the author relies on the reader's familiarity with the domain and their ability to decode such a puzzle. In this section, the study highlights significant differences within the cultures under examination, as illustrated in Figure 4. It is important to note that the analysis is not primarily focused on specific ways of transforming expressions. However, since this form of text modification plays a significant role in the creation of language play, it will be the subject of further research. Language play manifests itself in many discourses, representing an effective source of human creative potential and has, therefore, been in the sights of scholars for several decades.

**GRAPH 4**



The results indicate that the number of transformed expressions referring to literary works in Russian headlines was 210, constituting 97.22% of all Russian headlines containing culturemes. In Slovak headlines, there were 20 instances, accounting for 4.76%, while in Czech headlines, it reached 155, making up 35.68%.

## CONCLUSION

If we focus on the ability of mass media language to reflect the cultural specificities of a society, the excerpted material provides a representative sample for research and subsequent comparison of the results within the observed cultures.

Based on the extracted data, the results of the study reveal significant differences, not only in quantity but also in the way journalists employ cultures referencing literary works. The highest number of headlines meeting the research criteria was extracted from Czech periodicals, while the lowest number came from Slovak ones. However, the creativity of the authors of newspaper headlines in Russian periodicals stood out, where the linguistic features under study were mostly found in transformed forms. The least original newspaper headlines in the study were those of Slovak periodicals.

In Russian periodicals, the studied culturemes were used frequently and in a very inventive manner in the creation of headlines. The authors transformed expressions to create linguistic play, relying on the literacy and literary orientation of the recipients. In Russian newspaper headlines, lexical and morphological transformations were predominantly used, emphasizing the emotive and advertising functions of headlines. It is worth noting that references to classical, predominantly Russian literature were more frequent in Russian newspaper headlines.

Journalists have minimally engaged with references to literary works when creating headlines in Slovak periodicals. The extracted data indicate a low quantity, and while most expressions were transformed, the results do not represent a significantly inventive base. Lexical transformation, expansion of specific expressions, or their reduction predominated in the manner of modification. However, authors more frequently used expressive lexis or graphic embellishments of the text to support the individual functions of the headlines.

From Czech periodicals, we managed to extract the most newspaper headlines with cultural content referring to literary works. It should be noted that allusions to contemporary bestsellers were more frequent than to classical literature. In the Czech periodicals, the authors modified the studied features mainly to emphasize the emotional and advertising functions of the headlines, with lexical transformation prevailing, as well as the expansion or reduction of expressions. At the same time, Czech headlines were characterized by containing the highest percentage of untransformed expressions.

Summarizing the results of the study, we conclude that the concepts associated with literary works form a living component of contemporary Russian and Czech culture. The inventiveness demonstrated by the texts of newspaper headlines proves that Russian recipients are well-versed in the literary sphere and can identify pos-

itive, neutral, or negative connotations in headlines, even within the framework of language play. While Russian culture is dominated by works of domestic classical literature, Czech culture is more inclined toward so-called bestsellers, the best-selling works of contemporary authors.

Even though the number of Slovak headlines was comparable to the Czech ones, the content of cultureme headlines referring to literary works was minimal. If we proceed from the thesis that mass media language mirrors the language of society, the sample indicates that references to literary works do not constitute the dominant feature of Slovak linguistic culture. Slovak linguistic culture does not “prefer” references to literary works.

Linguistic anthropology, as a scientific discipline investigating the relationship between language and culture, is increasingly oriented towards the research of mass media texts. Our study has also shown that mass media language represents a promising basis for research in the field, with the possibility of extending it to some non-Slavic languages in the next step.

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