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### The Concept of the Frontier in the Discourse Analysis

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Abstract. The notion of frontier has been a research theme for the last decades in both sciences and humanities, being defined as a dynamic borderline, signaling interaction of discourses. This work is aimed to produce a coherent definition of frontier as a *latent discourse potential*, revealing itself by means of linguistic and extralinguistic *frontems*, in both explicit or implicit forms, with different degree of motivation. It is suggested the frontier discourse potential be taken into account in discourse analysis of any discourse types and genres as an influential functional category signaled by the pragmatic contexts and influencing the discourse semantics. The research is based on the empirical data, obtained from the discourse analysis of consumer discourse, extreme sports and activities discourse and the Internet discourse. The results prove the significance of contextual interpretation of frontems and their impact on the discourse semantics. It follows, frontier concept is pertinent to all kinds of discourses as a lingua-cultural sense forming domain, affecting either the form or the meaning of the discourse.

**Keywords:** frontier concept, frontier discourse, discourse analysis, frontem, consumer discourse, extreme sports discourse, the Internet discourse.

Research area: theoretical, applied, comparative and contrastive linguistics.

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## Концепт фронтира в дискурс-анализе

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Аннотация. В фокусе данного исследования находится актуальный в последние десятилетия в различных областях знаний концепт фронтира, под которым понимается подвижная граница области взаимодействия дискурсов. Целью работы выступает анализ и описание семантического содержания концептуального поля фронтира в лингвистическом и прагматическом аспектах, которые проводятся в рамках дискурс-анализа на материале дискурса потребления, дискурса экстремальных видов спорта и интернет-дискурса. В результате предлагается рассматривать фронтирный потенциал дискурса как характеристику, в различной степени присущую всем типам и жанрам дискурсов как в эксплицитном, так и в имплицитном виде, реализуемую посредством лингвистических и экстралингвистических фронтем (фронтирных маркеров дискурса) различной степени мотивации. Предполагается, что дискурс-анализ любого вида и жанра дискурса должен включать в себя важную функциональную категорию скрытого дискурсивного потенциала, определяемую прагматическим контекстом и семантикой анализируемого дискурса. Доказано значение и актуальность контекстуального анализа фронтем как единиц, формирующих лингвокультурное пространство, и их влияние на семантику, форму и значение всех видов дискурса.

**Ключевые слова:** концепт фронтира, дискурс фронтира, дискурс-анализ, фронтема, дискурс потребления, дискурс экстремальных видов спорта, интернет-дискурс.

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#### Introduction

Frontier is a polysemantic term, traditionally referring to the period of the American history from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century up to 1912, when the last western territories were recognized as states and admitted into the union. It is also referred to as *the American frontier*, *the Old West* and *the Wild West* meaning the massive geographical and cultural expansion in the mainland North America. New westwards territories were explored, and the vast lands were joined to the American states, influencing greatly on the formation of the *American character* and the

image of the frontier man. The archetypical American Frontier period is generally viewed from 1865 – the end of the American Civil War until the closing of the Frontier in 1890. The term was introduced by Frederick Jackson Turner an American historian, who argued that the frontier "promoted the formation of a composite nationality for the American people" (Turner, 1994), shaping their character and national identity and giving birth to the American democracy. According to Turner, frontier had made the crucial impact on the formation of the American identity, that has been

widely recognized and mutually accepted in the geographical, historical, political and social sciences.

#### Theoretical framework

The semantic scope of frontier concept differs from that of the border, implying a dynamic geopolitical strategy, such as the expansion of state territory - Macedonian Empire, Roman Empire, Ottoman Empire, British Empire, Russian Empire (Yakushenkov, 2019). The key features of the American frontier, formulated by J. Turner set the grounds for the frontier concept to emanate in different discourses - historical (Massip, 2012), literary, socio-political (Foucault, 1972; Sheridan 2004; Fairclough, 2015), scientific (Billings, 2006), medical, socio-cultural (Nash 2014; Sinelnikova, 2020) and others. Moreover, the frontier metaphor has become widely employed in the US space exploration, appealing to such images as "pioneering, homesteading, claim-staking and taming", According to Linda Billings, the idea of frontier is a dominant metaphor in the American rhetoric of space exploration (Billings, 2006). Environmental historian Roderick Nash suggested an alternative explanation of the idea of wilderness: "conceived as the habitat of other species, not as a human playground, wilderness is the best environment in which to learn that humans are members in, and not masters of the community of life" (Nash, 2014). From this and other works it is evident that the term 'frontier', primarily associated with the expanding of the American territory and culture, the interaction of the civilization and wilderness, has expanded the realm of its employment as well as its content. Contemporary reinterpreting of the frontier concept assuages its connotations, allowing to apply the term in the spheres other than American history in the meaning of 'dynamic borderline'. The knowledge humanity possesses has been gained by exploring multiple frontiers in various dimensions and continues to be acquired by means of crossing spacial, physical, psychological and spiritual frontiers, creating the linchpin for social progress, that justifies the relevance of this and other works, devoted to the frontier concept in the humanistic sciences. Lara

N. Sinelnikova assumes, that "the concept of the frontier has developed in a multi-vectorial way and has transformed into an interdisciplinary concept comprising the notion of the 'border', 'boundary line' and 'frontier' anthology" (Sinelnikova, 2020). The scholar defines the frontier as "a space realia and a concept, whereas the discourse is viewed as a means of perceiving reality and transforming it into a text" (Sinelnikova, 2020). In the realm of philosophical paradigm frontier theory is considered to be "a vital and creative property of human life" (Sinelnikova, 2020). Discourse analysis appears to comprise a series of the interdisciplinary approaches and methods that can be applied to examine every social domain in all different types of studies. The frontier theory introduced by S. N. Yakushenkov, is viewed as «an ideology, which having crossed the borders of our reality, started producing a new reality» (Yakushenkov, 2015). It consolidates synergistically all domains of human knowledge providing multi-dimensional descriptions, such as nature - culture - language, culture - language - mentality, landscape - culture - language - mentality, that is relevant to all approaches to the discourse analysis based on Michele Foucault's assumption that "discourse is a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation. Discourse in this sense is not an ideal, timeless form (...) it is from beginning to end, historical – a fragment of history (...) posing its own limits, its divisions, its transformations, the specific modes of its temporality" (Foucault, 1972: 117). "The majority of the contemporary discourse analytical approaches follow Foucault's conception of discourses as relatively rule-bound sets of statements which impose limits on what gives meaning" (Foucault, 1972). They continue to build on his ideas about truth being created discursively, recognizing that it is as dynamic as discourse itself and limited by the context.

#### Statement of the problem

We view frontier as a discursive universal and a lingua-cognitive domain, which every type of discourse is capable of entering, and which is introduced by special linguistic and non-linguistic markers – here termed frontems

(Bondarenko et al., 2021: 218–221). We fully support L. Sinelnikova's view on the frontier, as the main concept of the contemporary social sciences paradigm and agree, that it has played the crucial role in the 'paradigm shift', taking part in the contemporary social arena and being stipulated by the discourse. The discourse itself is a paradigm, as in social science the term describes a set of experiences, beliefs and values that affect an individual's perception of the reality.

In terms of the linguistic approach to the discourse analysis as a method of delving into the social sciences paradigm principles, the concept of the frontier reveals itself in multiple contexts and in multiple forms, which we should call 'frontems'. The term refers to linguistic and non-linguistic markers of the frontier discourse, which can be of spacious, cultural, social, ethnical or psychological character. Frontems mark a linguistic intercourse in the frontier social environment involving interaction of two or more discourses, at least one of which tends to be dominant and the other is becoming somewhat subdued. So, the purpose of this research is to define and describe the concept of frontier potential pertinent to all discourse types and genres and revealed in the shape of frontems on multiple linguistic and extralinguistic levels. Frontier potential is to be considered as one of the typological discourse characteristics in terms of the types and genres of discourses and a criterion for their analysis.

The degree of frontier potential may vary in different types and genres of discourses and stipulate the crucial criterion for a discourse taxonomy, whose description is still rather oblique and unclear. A. A. Kibrik suggests that discourses can be differentiated according to their modus (aural, written, electronic), genre, functional style and formality (Kibrik, 2009). When frontier potential is actualized, discourse enters lingua-cognitive frontier zone, interacting with antagonist discourses, otherwise latent frontier potential is awaiting for its actualization in the contexts created by different kinds of frontems, which are to be discussed below. The detection of the frontier potential would be crucial to the discourse analysis, comprising both linguistic and social aspects, the latter be-

ing for long neglected in the linguistic analysis of either the written or aural communication. Frontem types differ in terms of the aspect of the discourse under discussion. In his definition of the discourse Teun A. van Dijk mentions four major aspects, which are not to be neglected in the discourse analysis: 1) discourse as communicative continuum between the speaker and the listener in either aural or written form, in certain time and space context; 2) discourse is viewed as a linguistic text as the result and product of communication; 3) discourse as a genre of verbal communication, such as 'media discourse', consumer discourse, sports discourse and others; 4) discourse denoting a certain socio-political period or culture, such as English discourse, Russian discourse, Postsoviet discourse, and others (Dijk, 2013). It follows, 1) linguistic frontems may signal a shift in the chronotope, or the semiotic content of the text may exceed its linguistic domain by incorporating signs of nonverbal character - extralinguistic frontems. 2) frontier phenomenon is subjected to the discourse analysis, being the product of some lingua cognitive activities in a socio-cultural context that justifies that a genre and socio-cultural type of discourse are marked by frontems explicitly and implicitly. 3) the interaction between forms and functions of frontems accounts for attending to their motivation and is to be discussed further in high frontier potential discourses.

#### Discussion

For the purpose of this research we focus on high frontier potential discourses, where viable examples of frontems are found extensively: the lifestyle discourse, consumer discourse (Baudrillard, 1970), branding, political discourse, PR, literary discourse, the Internet discourse and other discourses, different in modus, degree of involvement / detachment, genre, narrative types (Kibrik, 2009), functional style and formality. In the process of this research it was observed that frontier markers can be expressed linguistically and visually, vividly identified or hidden, used purposefully or occur accidentally, that sets the ground for distinguishing such binary types of frontems as linguistic and extralinguistic; explicit vs *implicit; motivated* vs *arbitrary*, which occur solely or in combination as it can be seen from the discussion bellow.

# Explicit and implicit linguistic frontems in the consumer discourse

Consumer discourse, according to Jean Baudrillard is a frontier by nature, constituting the realm of new meanings representation and translation. Well-known linguistic signs with their established meanings become frontems, when used for something new, previously unknown, like: skinnies /drain pipes (jeans), converses (sports shoes), LPG massage (lipomassage), bomber (jacket), CAT scan (computed axial scan), gaslighting (psychological manipulation). Those lexemes form linguistic explicit frontems, which introduce new objects, processes and notions in the consumer discourse by trespassing the territories of other discourse genres, interacting with them and borrowing the terms. For instance, the choice of a family medical insurance package might include a discussion of the CAT scan possibility if necessity arises. Thus, a medical term, belonging to the medical discourse penetrates into the consumer discourse and is being used freely without any particular consideration of its precise professional meaning. Terms like LPG massage, drain pipes, decking, bomber, fillers (cosmetics), peptides (cosmetics), paraben free (cosmetics), e-book, and many others, being generated in professional discourses, have entered the consumer discourse, retaining their professional terminology connotations, while their denotative meanings tend to become somewhat oblique due to their frequent circulation. The empirical data show that the majority of consumers wishing to take an LPG massage course appeared to be hardly aware of what 'LPG' stands for, being quite content to know that it will reduce cellulite and help to lose weight. Consumers who needed having their lungs scanned could hardly formulate the difference between CAT scan and CT scan, using both terms synonymously. On the other side, drain pipes have nothing to do with plumbing when mentioned to name a kind of jeans and decking boards used in modern garden designs are not necessarily of the kind used for the

deck. Explicit linguistic frontems in the form of Cyrillic and Latin scripts contamination are widely seen in branding, names of public places and events. Examples are taken from the contemporary Crimean discourse: BUXAREZ (wine shop), XALVA (a café), КаZантип (Ка-Zantyp or KaZantip), an annual international sports and rave music festival, which used to be held near the headland Kazantip in Crimea. The first two lexemes are meant to be explicit linguistic frontems, having the letter 'X' whose pronunciation in BUXAREZ and XALVA does not correspond to the English phoneme [ks], but to the sound [h] in the Russian phonetics. In both words the linguistic sign 'X' indicates the same phoneme – [h], it follows, we speak about two explicit frontems, found in different linguistic and social contexts. They are definitely motivated for the designers, but not for the consumers, for whom they look and sound understandable, but rather arbitrary. On the contrary, the lexeme KaZahmun is both explicit and motivated, as the letter 'Z' taken from the English semiotic system is meant to show that the event had altered the location and is not to be associated with a certain spot on the Crimean peninsula, referring to its multicultural nature, as well as Ribiza, the name of a Crimean nightclub. It provides a vivid example of an explicit motivated frontem referring to the world famous Ibiza Beach Clubs and restaurants located on the eponymous Spanish island, whose name is associated with entertainment, music and parties. The participant of the Crimean Ribiza is ushered into the frontier discourse set by the name of the club and sustained by such extralinguistic elements as decoration, range of services, the audience and the menu, targeted to create the atmosphere of relax and happiness, Ibiza is famous for. The employment of frontems in the consumer discourse is justified by purely practical purposes of attracting customers, promote services and increasing sales like in case of CFC (Crimean Fried Chicken) - the name of a fast-food restaurant offering fried chicken seasoned in spice source and served with fried potatoes in baskets similar to that of KFC, a famous American brand (Kentucky Fried Chicken). Names of other menu items transliterated in Russian

as 'рингеры', 'баскеты', 'стрипсы' are also reminiscent of the KFC cuisine, bringing the participants into the frontier domain which can never be spared in this case due to both linguistic and extralinguistic frontems, which can also be implicit like in the lexeme Sushi Vësla, the name of a Russian fish restaurant, offering Japanese and Asian food. For a Russian consumer this expression is a transliterated idiom (in the word 'sushi' the last syllable is stressed) meaning 'have a rest', ' stop working', ' that is the place to stop by', whereas the word 'sushi', with the first stressed syllable, denotes a familiar Japanese food, creating a frontier discourse for the participant. Such frontems, whose meaning actualizes in the course of the linguistic, play may be called implicit motivated.

# Linguistic and extralinguistic frontems in the extreme sports discourse

Traditionally, crossing the frontier generates considerable amount of life-risk potential and precarious consequences for the frontier seekers. More recently though the high-risk aspect of the frontier discourse has been downplayed and its deviation from the mainstream has come to the fore, as, typically, it is not governed by external rules and regulations applied to the mainstream. Thus frontier has become a synonym of individual freedom, putting emphasis on personality, emotional strength, adrenaline and thrill. So, considering extreme sports as a frontier activity, it is worth mentioning that «the traditional approach has suggested that participants compete against the environment» (Brymer et al., 2020), while the results of more recent research demonstrate that competing against the environment would not form the main objective for the participants as they view it as fruitless. The reason is that «extreme sport participation is different from traditional sport participation because the environment is not constrained by artificial boundaries». (Brymer et al., 2020). This crucial shift in the attitude to the extreme sports and activities has brought an immense impact on the frontier paradigm both explicitly and implicitly.

In terms of the linguistic aspect of the extreme sports and activities discourses, such

as ski freeride, freeski or backcountry skiing, there are explicit warnings, cautioning thrill lovers to be careful crossing the boundary of the controlled zone: «STOP», «DANGER», «CAUTION», «WARNING», etc. However, there are no prohibition signs with negative imperative sentences, stating the limits for the participants. All ski resorts employ the system of trail icons and slope colours, signifying the level of difficulty and danger, represented both graphically and linguistically that accounts for referring to these signs as linguistic and extralinguistic frontems, which can further be classified into linguistic explicit motivated (text signs) and extralinguistic explicit motivated (trail icons and slope colours). In the Timberline Lodge ski resort explicit linguistic frontems, whose motivation is boosted by large thick print, are to be seen everywhere, announcing the frontier of the patrolled zone with no prohibition to cross it: «SNOW SUFFOCA-TION HAZARD», «Tree wells & Deep Snow Immersion». Moreover, they provide some advice in the form of instructions on how to behave in the frontier zone: «Avoid Tree Wells and Keep Your Partner in Sight». Some more powerful and persuasive explicit frontems are found, addressing personally and directly to the skier: «YOU ARE LEAVING THE SKI RESORT. YOU CAN DIE. THIS IS YOUR DECISION». «YOU ARE ENTERING AVA-LANCHE COUNTRY. Imperative mood and precise details are meant to contribute to the psychological frontier of some hesitating skier: BEWARE OF SLOPE ANGLES MEASUR-ING BETWEEN 30 AND 45 DEGREES. BE AWARE OF SUBTLE CHANGES IN SLOPE ANGLE, ASPECT AND ELEVATION». And another warning board follows: «AVOID WIND LOADED SLOPES. BEWARE OF UNUSUALLY WET OR WARM CONDI-TIONS AND EXTENDED PERIODS OF EX-TREME COLD. BEWARE OF ANY RAPID CHANGE OF CONDITIONS. Glacier Country Avalanche Centre. ARE YOU SAVVY?» As long as both psychological and geographical frontiers are crossed, the pragmatics has altered, and linguistic as well as extralinguistic frontems seize to function. The pragmatics of extreme activities influences immensely the semantic aspect of communication and is to be taken into consideration in the process of its interpreting.

Extreme sports activities have been evolving rapidly, facilitated by technology, suitable high-quality equipment, well-developed physical and technical skills of the participants, the life hazard being assuaged. In the positivist theory perspective participation in extreme sports and activities is juxtaposed against predetermined mainstream characteristics. The extreme activities, whose names contain «free» morpheme, such as free ride, free ski, free surf, free dive, free climb, freestyle and others have gradually entered the mainstream. Thus, the morpheme «free» functions as a lingua-cognitive marker of the frontier discourse potential, which can be revealed under certain circumstances, determining the context of the discourse interpretation. In our classification the semi-bound morpheme 'free' functions as an implicit linguistic motivated frontem. For example, the term free ski nowadays is applied to the ski activities involving jumps, tricks and terrain park features, also including free ride, big mountain skiing / all-terrain skiing and sometimes ski alpinism. Starting as an exclusive extreme activity in the 1980s, free skiing has evolved into two Olympic freestyle skiing events half-pipe skiing and Slopestyle. Frontier connotation of the extreme activities is revealed in their intrinsic value focused on the aesthetic criteria – freedom, thrill, selfexpression, rather than traditional quantitative parameters - distance, time, score, when assessing performance.

The frontier axiological aspect has undergone considerable transformations as well. These days life hazard has been eliminated by the equipment, services and safety measures, «...the risk focus has important limitations and provide a more relational appreciation of extreme sports as emergent activities that afford opportunities for existential reflections and self-actualization» (Immonen, Brymer, et al., 2018). The relation between a performer and the environment is what much more emphasized today in the extreme sports discourse, which is reflected in ski resorts advertising profiles: "Freeride skiing – (...) describes a partic-

ular type of skiing which takes place on a natural off-piste terrain and includes deep powder snow and steep runs. ... In fact, free riding is the most essential form of snowboarding. Free riders don't follow a marked route. On the contrary, they enjoy the freedom of untracked runs" (explore-share.com). Frontems are italicized and the syntagma in bold is highlighted by the author of the commercial. Examining the structures of extreme sports participants personalities Monasterio and Coloninger conclude, that they do not form a homogeneous group. Their mutual concern, however, is with putting emphasis on self-actualization compared to the traditional notion of social pressure. "Happiness, challenging oneself, being in nature, friendships and balance" were also noted as important factors by A. Hetland. (Hetland, Vutterso, 2012). In this case we deal with an implicit linguistic motivated frontem expressed by a semi-bound morpheme 'free', whose lexical meaning sets the implied connotation of the frontem and the discourse.

# Motivated and arbitrary frontems in the Internet discourse

Over the last decades, the Internet discourse has been attracting much attention of researchers in all scientific domains, including Internet Linguistics (Baron, 2008), Psycholinguistics, Applied Linguistics (Baron, 1984), Discourse studies (Crystal, 2004) and others, being also referred to as Computer Discourse, Computer Communication, Digital Communication, Electronic Discourse, Computermediated communication. No matter how corresponding these terms might sound, the phenomena they name are in many aspects dissimilar. Seemingly clear and definite, the notion of the Internet discourse is still a disputable issue, viewed from various angles by Russian and Western linguists. But what addresses their mutual concerns though, is the impact of technology in general and the Internet in particular on linguistic and social norms of the language and culture, including moral and ethical facets (Crystal, 2004). In the course of this study some aspects of the Internet discourse are tackled to demonstrate its high frontier potential, which is revealed in

all types of frontems, correlated to each other in their functioning. The Internet discourse fragmented structure accounts for considering such feature of frontems as a degree of motivation. In linguistics three kinds of motivation have been defined so far: phonetic, semantic and morphological. In psychology and anthropology - intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are singled out, whereas for the purpose of this study we distinguish linguistic and extralinguistic motivations, revealing themselves correspondingly in linguistic and extralinguistic frontems, whose semantic, structural, acoustic or visual intrinsic form (Demyankov, 1989: 32) is to be considered as a manifestation of the frontier discourse. High frontier potential of the Internet discourse, exposed in heteroglossia (external voices, influencing the discourse pattern explicitly or implicitly), the hypertext (a means of crossing special and temporal restrictions) and the creolized text, comprising either linguistic or nonlinguistic elements, such as pictures and animation, accounts for extensive precedents of both types of motivation and their combinations. In this way, linguistic frontems like freeride, freeski, freestyle are semantically and structurally motivated and a thick black frame in the ski resort warning boards, announcing the boundary of the patrolled area, is a manifestation of visual extralinguistic motivation. A vivid illustration of visually motivated frontems can be highlighted, colored or underlined fragments in the text, indicating that the phrase not only describes an action, but it encloses the activity itself, guiding the participant into another discourse without leaving the current one. Let us consider the Bolshoi Theatre website, consisting of textual and visual elements contributing to the discourse. It also contains some highlighted phrases (links), like: 'buy a ticket', 'ongoing events', 'visit to the theatre', 'address', 'contacts' and others, which are explicit linguistic motivated frontems for the discourse participant, who would be able to buy a ticket by clicking on the phrase, or view the location of the theatre on the city map by activating the link 'address'. Such frontems are motivated, generating discourses, which they announce or give some information about. Thus, the link

'address' not only shows the locality of the building but also visualizes suggestions how to get there; 'visit to the theatre' offers some advice on how to buy and return tickets, what discounts available and how to get them; what to wear, how early to come; how to behave at the theatre; how to give flowers to your favorite actor; where to eat.

Although, motivated frontems function extensively in all genres of the Internet discourse, because they are informative of the discourses they refer to, easy to understand and convenient to follow, arbitrary frontems have their fair share in the Internet texts too. Let us refer to well-known explicit extralinguistic frontems - the '# sign' (hash tag/number/pound sign), used in photo sharing social nets services, and the '&' (the ampersand), which functions as a logogram representing the conjunction 'and' in hand written texts (originated as a ligature of the Latin 'et'), but in other contexts, such as logographic and idiographic programming languages, the ampersand is represented in the Unicode or it can be employed to introduce an SGML entity, such as &nbsp for 'non-breaking space' or & for a Greek letter 'a'.

#### Conclusion

The results of the present work show, that frontier is to be viewed as a concept and a discourse genre and can be defined as a linguacognitive domain in which two or more discourses interact spaciously, culturally, socially and linguistically, creating lingua-cognitive discursive environment for the truth's emanations. Conceptually, frontier has its traditional interpretation as a dynamic borderline and as an interdisciplinary analytical approach in the framework of the discourse analysis both in sciences and humanities, that justifies considering a discourse from the stance of a degree of its frontier potential, revealing itself through frontems - frontier markers of either linguistic or extralinguistic character. The classification of frontems, suggested in this work, evidently, acquires deeper analysis and should be discussed more extensively on the basis of prolific examples, that is the purpose of the further research into the frontier discourse characteristics.

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