

The Extremist Internet Discourse: Legal, Scientific and Practical Aspects of Forensic Linguistic Analysis

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Abstract. The paper presents a discussion of legal, scientific, and practical aspects of forensic linguistic analysis of the Internet extremist discourse as practiced at present and might be improved in the future. The author states that present experts' practice in Russian legislation is based on limited knowledge of Internet linguistics properties and is conducted mostly as an empirical art in which the forensic linguist examiner acquires skill through extensive linguistic training and forensic experience. Courtroom cases in which forensic linguists have offered their written reports and testimony on extremist materials distributed on the Internet have got negative critical assessment in mass-media and scientific linguistic society. The judicial responses have varied with rulings, both admitting and rejecting extremist linguistic evidence. To some extent, the various legal viewpoints have reflected various linguistic methodical perspectives regarding the extremist diagnostic criteria to be expected in the examined Internet discourse represented under various forensic and communicative conditions. The necessity to use the unified linguistic criteria of resolving Internet text ambiguity is substantiated in the paper. The author concludes that methodological uncertainties concerning the contemporary expert practice of detecting linguistic signs of extremist statements are so significant as requiring that the forensic applications be approached with great caution.

Keywords: *forensic linguistics, text analysis, extremism, terrorism, the Internet, discourse*

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Экстремистский интернет-дискурс: правовые, научные и практические аспекты судебно-лингвистической экспертизы

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Аннотация. Рассмотрены правовые, научные и практические аспекты судебно-лингвистической экспертизы экстремистского интернет-дискурса. Автор считает, что текущая экспертная практика в России основана на ограниченных знаниях об интернет-лингвистике и больше напоминает эмпирическое искусство, когда судебный эксперт приобретает навыки благодаря хорошей лингвистической подготовке и обширному опыту в судебно-экспертной деятельности. В средствах массовой информации и научном лингвистическом сообществе судебные разбирательства, где использовались заключения судебных экспертов-лингвистов относительно экстремистских материалов, распространяемых в интернете, получили негативную критическую оценку. Судебные решения менялись в зависимости от того, признавались или отклонялись лингвистические доказательства экстремизма. В определенной степени различные правовые точки зрения отражают методические расхождения относительно диагностических экстремистских критериев в рассматриваемом интернет-дискурсе, представленном в различных судебно-экспертных и коммуникативных условиях. В статье обоснована необходимость использования единых лингвистических критериев при обосновании двусмысленности интернет-текстов. Сделан вывод, что методологические неопределенности выявления языковых признаков экстремистских высказываний требуют осторожного отношения к текущей судебно-экспертной практике.

Ключевые слова: *судебно-лингвистическая экспертиза, экспертиза текста, экстремизм, терроризм, интернет, дискурс*

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Introduction

The problem of violent extremism and its most radical form – terrorism remains one of the most urgent problems in modern Russia due to growing manifestations of intolerance and hostility in the society and increasing extremist activities via the Internet. In mass communication, this is reflected in the growing expansion of destructive, deviant and criminal behavior, manifestations of violent verbal extremism, justifications of terrorism, and other forms. Extremists and terrorists use online internet-message boards and chat rooms to share information, coordinate attacks, spread propaganda, raise funds, and recruit supporters. So the term extremism on the Internet as a means of communication is often referred to as propagation of extreme views, usually of a political or religious nature. Although violent extremism is not a new phenomenon, it is increasingly recognized worldwide as a significant challenge of our times [1].

The websites of supporters, sympathizers, and fans of extremist organizations with no formal affiliation containing sympathetic sentiments to their political aims or views represent difficulties for law enforcement to track extremist content. One of the most effective ways extremists and terrorists use the Internet is the spread of propaganda films published on video hosting sites that are widely rebroadcasted on the world's news networks. However, videos are not the only form of extremist and terrorist propaganda. In the sphere of social network communication, there is a popularization of quasi-anonymous groups and communities, whose communication channels use bullying, trolling, mobbing. This environment is characterized by a reduced tolerance threshold and an increase in mass media discourse's aggressiveness.

The experts in cybercrimes warn that terrorists have developed sophisticated encryption tools and creative techniques that make the Internet an efficient and relatively secure means of correspondence [2]. These include steganography, a technique used to hide messages in graphic files, transmitting information through saved email drafts in an online email account accessible to anyone with the password [3]. The problem of the speaker or

author identification in the oral text is also essential [4]. In this regard, it is evident that the system of countering extremism and terrorism requires not only the presence of secure digital technologies and detailed legal regulation but also the development of effective forensic means of extremist discourse identification [5].

Socio-cultural threats and the Internet

Fighting violent extremism is mainly an ideological struggle because it can subvert the very founding principles of humanity. The spread of extremism's ideology poses a particular danger for the worldview formation of young people in the conditions of the information war activation and strengthening of competitive opposition in the international arena [6–8].

The main socio-cultural threats on the Internet at present include:

- speech acts of incitement to hatred or enmity based on social affiliation (language, gender, nationality, race, and others);
- solicitations to addresses to commit a terrorist act with the intent;
- commands, requests or encouragements of another person to engage in specific conduct which would constitute such a crime as an extremist or terrorist act;
- speech acts of public disobedience glorification, legal nihilism, terrorist organizations' heroization;
- false and unprivileged publication by writing, printing, picture, effigy, or other fixed representation to the eye, which exposes any person to hatred, contempt, ridicule, or obloquy, or which causes him to be shunned or avoided, or which has a tendency to injure him in his occupation;
- speech acts provoking anti-constitutional conducts (including violent state putsch, revolution, separatism, and others);
- publications associated with the extremist ideology propaganda (nationalism, neo-fascism, religious extremism, and others);
- open or disguised recruitment to radical, terrorist and criminal groups and destructive communities through social networks;
- a cyber-rolling, cyber-bullying, threats evoking a sense of shame, hostility;

– discriminatory statements related to appearance, mental abilities, ethnicity, skills, and other aspects.

Under the illusion of anonymity and permissiveness, social networks, forums, and other internet platforms are increasingly becoming a criminal environment, which requires the development of modern approaches to legal regulation of communication and protection from malicious information in the digital sphere.

The main problem is the need to ensure, on the one hand, the protection of public interest (the constitutional order, integrity, and security of the Russian Federation), and on the other – the freedom protection of conscience and religion, freedom of thought, speech, media, the protection of the rights to seek freely, locate, transmit, produce and disseminate information by any legal way.

The current legal framework in Russia for countering extremism, law enforcement practice, as well as domestic and foreign studies of “hate speech” or “language of enmity” provide a wealth of material for forming a systematic view of the phenomena of “verbal extremism” and develop effective legal measures to prevent its spread. However, due to the lack of a standard (unified) methodological approach within forensic experts involved in internet discourse examination, the law enforcement officers have to evaluate the results of a forensic examination of potentially extremist internet discourse at their discretion and determine whether the freely distributed information products on the Internet have or have not the extremist meaning.

The legal framework for countering extremism

The European Union rejects violence and hatred and will never tolerate racism or xenophobia¹ in whatever form or against whatever religion or ethnic group.² As noted in the Charter on Fundamental Rights, the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality, and solidarity and is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law.³ It is vital to maintain

the crucial balance between different fundamental rights in this area, particularly the right to life on the one hand, and the right to freedom of expression and privacy on the other. Terrorism constitutes one of the most severe violations of fundamental freedoms, and any arguments that attempt to justify certain violent practices as an expression of diversity must also be unconditionally rejected.⁴

International human rights law while proclaiming the right for everyone to freedom of expression, provides that any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence; any dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, any incitement to racial discrimination, as well as all acts of violence or incitement to such acts directed against any race or group of persons of another color or ethnic origin, any assistance for carrying out racist activities, including its financing; all discrimination based on religion or belief must be prohibited by law. The Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism of June 15, 2001 provides that terrorism, separatism, and extremism, regardless of their motives, cannot be justified under any circumstances, and those responsible for such acts must be brought to justice under the law.⁵

The Constitution of the Russian Federation proclaims the person, its rights and freedom the supreme value, and their recognition, observance and protection – a state duty (article 2) and stipulates that Federal Law may limit the rights and freedoms of man and citizen only in proportion to the constitutionally significant purposes (article 55). In the Russian Federation, ideological and political diversity and multiparty character are recognized; no ideology can be established as a state or compulsory one. It is prohibited to create and operate public associations whose goals or actions are aimed at violently changing the foundations of the constitutional order and violating the integrity of the Russian Fed-

⁴ European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2013 on strengthening the fight against racism, xenophobia and hate crime. [https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?lang=en&reference=2013/2543\(RSP\)](https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?lang=en&reference=2013/2543(RSP))

⁵ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. December 10, 1948; The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. December 16, 1966; The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. December 21, 1965; The Declaration of the UN General Assembly “On the elimination of all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief”. November 25, 1981; The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. November 04, 1950.

¹ Council Directive 2000/78/EC of November 27, 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation - OJ L 303, 02.12.2000, p. 303.

² Article 13 of the Treaty of the European Union, Council Directive 2000/43/EC of June 29, 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial and ethnic origin - OJ L 180, 19.07.2000, p. 22.

³ Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2000. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf

eration, undermining the security of the state, creating armed groups, and inciting social, racial, national, and religious hostility and hatred (article 13 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation). According to the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the state guarantees equality of human and civil rights and freedoms regardless of gender, race, nationality, language, origin, property and official status, place of residence, attitude to religion, beliefs, membership in public associations, and other circumstances; any form of restriction of citizens' rights on the grounds of social, racial, national, linguistic, or religious affiliation is prohibited (article 19). The Constitution of the Russian Federation, while guaranteeing freedom of thought and speech, prohibits propaganda or agitation that incites social, racial, national or religious hatred and enmity, or propaganda of social, racial, national, religious or linguistic superiority (article 29).

The Criminal Code of the Russian Federation provides the liability for verbal extremism to implement these constitutional prohibitions and fulfill international obligations. Extremist materials are legally defined as public calls for the implementation of extremist activities or that justify the need to carry out such activities, including the works of the leaders of the national socialist workers' party of Germany, the fascist party of Italy, publications that justify national and (or) racial superiority, the practice of committing military or other crimes aimed at the destruction of any ethnic, social, racial, national or religious group. Public calls should be understood as appeals encouraging the addressee to undertake extremist activities expressed in any form (oral, written, using technical means, information, and telecommunication networks including the Internet).⁶

Materials and methods

Our study was aimed to test the hypothesis that due to the complexity of the Internet text with the extremist meaning being influenced by modern technologies, a new phenomenon of verbal and nonverbal singularity in a polycode text is formed. As polycode text we consider any speech product in which a message is encoded by semiotically heterogeneous means: verbal and nonverbal components, the union

of which is a particular structure characterized by the manifestation of the interdependence of its components. Formal signs of the polycode internet text are still: integrity, coherence, expansion, logical completeness, communicative orientation. The polycode text with extremist meaning explicates implicit links with other texts in the form of allusions while maintaining the text structure. As the polycode text becomes more complex (integrating verbal, iconic, multimedia and hypertext, and so on), a new approach to diagnostic linguistic features as markers for extremist meaning is needed. Ignoring any component of the polycode text is fraught with expert errors and a variety of legal qualifications [9–14].

The research aimed to evaluate the efficiency of diagnostic linguistic features as markers for extremist meaning [15, pp. 19–22] in the polycode (verbal and nonverbal) text. The corpus used to evaluate the diagnostic linguistic features as markers for extremist meaning was compiled from 60 written in Russian forensic linguistic reports (forensic examinations and their critical reviews) in criminal cases related to extremism. The reports and reviews available in the public domain were collected by monitoring the websites of Russian expert organizations and communities affiliated with the special linguistic examinations.

Results and discussion

The presence of the appropriate methodology and unified linguistic criteria for identifying signs of verbal extremism in the internet discourse allow law enforcement, on the one hand, to respond quickly, preventing speech act for its mass media dissemination, and on the other – to avoid excesses, assigning a variety of different forensic examinations, when this is not particularly necessary. Unfortunately, extremist diagnostics of a polycode text varies from one forensic linguist to another, and there is still no single interagency approach to analyzing texts, especially the internet polycode texts, that are to be forensically examined for signs of extremism.

Despite the existing differences, a common approach can be determined. Thus, extremism is interpreted as a commitment to extreme views and destructive, aggressive measures of social resolution of conflict situations. The extremist propaganda is impossible without the use of language. In this regard, in all cases, when required to identify the ex-

⁶ Resolution of the Plenum of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation of June 28, 2011 No. 11 Moscow "On judicial practice in criminal cases of crimes of extremist orientation". July 04, 2011. Russian newspaper. Federal issue No. 5518 (142). (In Russ.).

tremist content forensic linguistic evidence is relevant [16, 17].

We emphasize that when assigning forensic examinations in cases of crimes of extremist orientation, it is not allowed to raise legal issues that are not within the expert's competence related to the assessment of the speech act, the resolution of which is within the exclusive competence of the court. In particular, experts cannot be asked whether the text contains calls for the extremist activity or whether information materials are intended to incite hatred or enmity.

The analysis of the impact on the addressee, motivation, attitudes, social stereotypes formed in the reader (listener), the perlocutionary effect of the communicative act is not included in the scope of linguistically explicated meanings in the text, and therefore is not reconstructed by linguistic methods in the text. Linguists, taking on the analysis of socio-political views, ideas, stereotypes, and attitudes formed by the reader, inevitably go beyond the limit of their competence, from the area of "speech conflicts" to the area of "social conflicts". If it is necessary to establish the impact of the text, it is advisable to assign a comprehensive psychological and linguistic expertise, or to attract other specialists (historians, religious scholars, political scientists, and others), when the text differs in genre or discursive originality [17–20].

The psychological part being additive integrates the results of linguistic examination based on semantic and pragmatic analyses. Without detracting from the significance and potential of using specialized psychological knowledge in solving issues related, for example, to the characteristics of the emotional state, identifying signs of increased hostility of the author, aggressiveness, suggestibility, dependence, we believe that the involvement of a specialist in the field of psychology for conducting complex examinations and research is not prescriptive. If it is necessary to use the psychologist's knowledge with the linguistic one, the complex psycholinguistic examination may be performed, or a specialist in psychology might be evoked to testimony in a court. Our research revealed some acute problems of legal, scientific, and practical issues of the forensic linguistic expertise of extremist internet discourse.

First of all, it seems evident that verbal extremism is understood by linguists and lawyers differently.

Forensically verbal extremism is a purposeful communicative act of public transmission of messages in the form of verbal or polycode text including oral or written speech statements that: a) encourage or incite, initiate, provoke or direct illegal actions of an extremist nature; b) justify them; c) promote Nazi or similar symbols and attributes; d) are aimed at inciting national, racial, or religious enmity or hatred, including the transmission of information by public media in public speeches, printed publications, and mass media (radio, television).

From the legal perspective, the objective side of verbal extremism consists of such illegal speech acts as:

- calls for extremist activities;
- statements aimed at inciting hatred or enmity, as well as humiliation of human dignity;
- justification of the need to carry out extremist activities;
- the propaganda of Nazi attributes and symbols similar to them to the point of confusion.

Since article 280 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation provides the liability for public calls to extremist activities, public dissemination of information that justifies the necessity of committing illegal actions against persons based on race, nationality, religious affiliation, and such, or information that justifies such activities, should be qualified under article 282 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation if there are other signs of this type of a crime.

The competence of the forensic linguistic expertise includes the determination of pragmatic aims related to the verbal explication of the concept of "justification" in the extremist text messages, posts, and comments and the study of the semantic structure of the communicative act of "aggression". Actions aimed at inciting hatred or enmity should be understood, in particular, as statements justifying and (or) asserting the need for genocide, mass repression, deportations, and other illegal actions, including the use of violence, against representatives of a nation, race, adherents of a particular religion, and other groups of persons. Criticism of political organizations, ideological and religious associations, political, ideological, or religious beliefs, national or religious customs should not per se be considered an act aimed at inciting hatred or enmity.

Criticism in the media of officials (professional politicians), their actions and beliefs should not per se be considered in all cases as an action aimed at humiliating the dignity of a person or a group of persons, since the limits of permissible criticism for these persons are more extensive than for individuals.

A statement of judgment and reasoning using the facts of ethnic, confessional or other social relations in academic or political discussion and texts not intended to incite hatred or enmity and humiliating the dignity of a person or group of persons on the grounds of sex, race, nationality, language, religion, membership of a particular social group is not a crime provided by article 282 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation.

At present distinguishing between criticism and extremist statements is particularly difficult for the law enforcement officers and forensic experts.

Criticism is the analysis, evaluation, and judgment of the phenomena in any area of human activity. The tasks of criticism are:

- identifying contradictions;
- error detection and analysis;
- parsing (analysis), discussing something to give an assessment (for example, literary criticism);
- negative judgment about something (for instance, in art, social life), indicating shortcomings;
- research, scientific verification of the authenticity of something (for example, criticism of the text, criticism of historical sources);
- feedback, discussion of something in order to express a point of view;
- assessment.

It is necessary to take into account the provisions of articles 3 and 4 of the “Declaration on Freedom of Political Discussion in the Media”, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on February 12, 2004, and the practice of the European Court of Human Rights, according to which political figures seeking to gain public opinion, thereby agree to become the object of public political discussion and criticism in the media; public officials may be criticized in the media for the way they perform their duties, as this is necessary to ensure that they perform their duties transparently and responsibly.

Government representatives are not a social group in themselves. Criticism of the government and individual politicians is not extremism. Public officials may be criticized in the media for how they perform their duties,

as this is necessary to ensure that they perform their duties in a transparent and responsible manner.

The guidelines recommended for practical application by the scientific and methodological council of the Russian Federal Center of Forensic Science under the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation should be used as criteria for distinguishing between criticism and extremist statements aimed at inciting discord. In particular, the criteria include the speech purpose for which negative information is reported, the general content and semantic orientation of the text, and the nature of the negative information itself.

In extremist speech actions related to individuals and groups, there is a conscious manifestation of a negative attitude to the subject of speech – a group (representative) of persons united by national or other socially significant characteristics.

It is expressed using different types of negative ratings (bad, unworthy, enemy, do not like, do not respect, and such). The most important sign of the expression of such an attitude is what can be called “the orientation of the relationship to the person”. It manifests itself in the following:

a) the object of negative emotional evaluation is the personal qualities of the group’s representatives, and not only (not so much) their specific actions, expressed views;

b) attributed negative properties are not derived directly from a specific situation, are not related to it; if the situation is described, it is only in order to justify their presence, the validity of the negative attitude.

When criticizing, the object of a negative attitude is not the subject of speech itself (the person), but its actions and views. A valid criticism of the output in the personal sphere eliminates. Criticism is not characterized by a polar, one-sided assessment (combining a negative assessment of one subject of speech with a positive assessment of another subject of speech). The linguist should clarify what precisely the assessment in the disputed statement of a person or action concerns, as well as identifying hidden comparisons.

Persecution of journalists for criticism, expressed in the correct form, is not allowed under the provisions of international legal instruments, in particular the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights as well as practice of the European Court of Human Rights (for example, *Ukhov vs the Russian Federation*, *Novaya Gazeta*

and Borodyansky vs the Russian Federation, Andrushko vs the Russian Federation, Bezymyanny vs the Russian Federation, Fedchenko vs the Russian Federation, Zakharov vs the Russian Federation, Grinberg vs the Russian Federation).

Article 10 (1) of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), for example, states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right should include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers".

As the European Court of Human Rights has repeatedly pointed out, freedom of expression, as defined in article 10 (1) ECHR, is one of the basic foundations of a democratic society, a fundamental condition for its progress and self-realization of each of its members. Freedom of speech covers not only information or ideas that are met with favorably or viewed as harmless or neutral, but also those that offend, shock, or cause concern. These are the requirements of pluralism, tolerance, and liberalism, without which there is no democratic society.

Freedom of expression, which is valuable for everyone, is also valuable for political parties and their active members. They represent their constituents, consider issues that concern them, and protect their interests. Thus, interference with the freedom of expression of a politician or a member of an opposition party requires the court to exercise the most acute control. Criticism of the activities of persons who perform public functions is allowed to a broader extent than to private individuals.

The European Court of Human Rights, particularly in its decision in the case of Fedchenko vs the Russian Federation (February 11, 2010) stated that the scope of permissible criticism is broader for public servants acting in an official capacity and for politicians than for individuals.

As already noted above, statements, judgments, conclusions using the facts of ethnic, confessional or other social relations in academic or political discussion and texts, information materials not aimed at inciting hatred or enmity, without any intention to incite hatred or enmity and humiliating the dignity of a person or group of persons on the grounds of sex, race, nationality, language, origin, attitude to religion, membership of a particular social group of extremists does not apply.

The forensic examination of internet discourse should be based on the totality of all the circumstances of the offense and consider, in-

ter alia, context, form, and content of posted information, the availability and content of reviews or other expressions of relationship to it.

Diagnostically significant signs of an extremist text are:

- statements in the form of a call (for specific actions); statements in the form of propaganda (national, religious, linguistic, racial superiority, exclusivity or inferiority);

- statements aimed at inciting discord, enmity, hatred, the humiliation of a person's dignity, insulting a person on specific grounds (gender, race, nationality, attitude to religion).

The signs of a public call have utterances urging addressee to commit violent actions, inciting extremist activity.

The signs of propaganda have texts aimed at forming radical views, ideologies, world-views of an extremist nature, ideas, or motives for actions aimed at inciting national, racial, or religious hostility.

The signs of incitement to hatred or enmity on social grounds have statements that are hostile, aggressive, derogatory, antagonistic to any nationality, race, or social group, containing negative assessments (explication of a sharply negative attitude) to a social group or its representatives.

In contemporary expert practice, in order to extract diagnostically significant features of extremism, a semantic study is carried out in which the semantic content of words, statements, and the text as a whole are established. The extremist meaning of the polycode internet text is simultaneously expressed with two main components: (1) the purpose of a communicative act (a call to action, the justification, charge, conviction, excitement, and others) and (2) the content of the verbal and nonverbal parts of the text (what exactly is encouraged, convinced, and so on). These two components can be conventionally called the target of the extremist meaning. Compliance with only one of these criteria is not enough: the analysis of the text content without analyzing its purpose is incomplete, and therefore the aim should relate only to specific content.

Diagnostically significant features of the extremist text are:

- 1) intention of the author's activity in creating the text, its arbitrariness, and meaningfulness;

- 2) publicity of speech activity (public, mass media communication);

- 3) the presence of calls in the text (for specific actions);

4) the presence of propaganda in the text (national, religious, linguistic, racial superiority, exclusivity or inferiority);

5) the presence of justification (terrorism or extremist activity);

6) the intention to incite hatred, the humiliation of human dignity, insulting a person on specific grounds (gender, race, nationality, attitude to religion, and such).

When examining the meaning of an utterance (text), an expert should proceed from what is expressed by the speech act. It is unacceptable to attribute a particular meaning if no means of expressing it are found. The analysis of what exactly is said should not be replaced by general arguments on the topic "what the author wanted to say by this". Concepts such as "manipulation techniques", "hidden appeal", "hidden intent", should not be used in cases where they are not supported by specific and provable language means of expressing meaning. It is also impossible to assume that the text may or may not affect the recipient. The research should focus on the settings that the text is intended to form. Whether they can be formed in a particular recipient (reader, listener) and with what degree of probability is the subject of particular experimental research.

To solve the problem of identifying linguistic signs of verbal extremism, the use of generally accepted methods of analyzing the meanings of words, utterances, and the text as a whole, developed in linguistic semantics, is necessary.

The semantic analysis is performed to determine the lexical meanings of words and their combinations and to interpret their meanings and functions. Grammatical categories are set using grammatical analysis. Contextual analysis is used to determine the meaning of language units and clarify their semantic content in the context of the statement or text. Functional stylistic analysis is necessary to determine the stylistic specificity of the studied language units, belonging to a specific functional style. Component analysis is a method of studying the content side of significant units of a language, to decompose the meaning into minimal semantic components.

Conclusion

The present experts' practice in Russian legislation is based on limited knowledge of internet linguistics properties and is conducted mostly as an empirical art in which the forensic linguist examiner acquires skill through extensive linguistic training and forensic experience. Courtroom cases in which forensic linguists

have offered their written reports or testimony on extremist materials distributed via the Internet have got negative critical assessment in mass-media and scientific linguistic society. The judicial responses have varied with rulings, both admitting and rejecting extremist linguistic evidence. To some extent, the various legal perspectives have reflected various linguistic methodical viewpoints regarding the extremist diagnostic criteria to be expected in the examined internet discourse represented under various forensic and communicative conditions. So it is necessary to use the unified criteria of linguistic extremism signs while conducting any forensic linguistic examination of a polycode internet text.

In cases where the polycode internet text does not contain the obligatory explicated linguistic signs of extremist meaning (subject, attitude, aim), there are no grounds for checking these texts for the presence of psychological signs of extremist impact - the latter assume the presence of the first and are based on them.

In the contemporary Russian jurisprudence, balancing is undertaken between the constitutional benefit of freedom of wording and the harms to which it might give rise, with a presumption in favor of expression. Our analysis of forensic linguistic reports and their reviews revealed some sharp scientific, practical, and legal problems in need of a solution. There is an essential boundary between communications that add to a socially valuable "marketplace of ideas" by their expression or critique of ideas and values, no matter how unpalatable, and communications that are primary kinds of conduct: acts of harassment, first moves in a fight, verbal actions of subordination, and subjugation or intimidation of others. These communicative acts are forensically examined through concepts: "fighting words" – as kinds of provocation or inchoate action, "speech plus" – threats or incitements, and "hate speech" [21, p. 39].

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