Hudz N.O.
Visual and Linguistic Profiles of Environmental Blogs

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Abstract. The article describes visual and linguistic peculiarities of environmental blogs. Our analysis illustrates that segmentation of blogs covering environmental issues is based on a system of hyperlink. On the morphological level environmental blogs make extensive usage of plural forms of nouns, degrees of comparison, Past Simple and Future Simple tenses and imperative mood. Lexical stylistic peculiarities of environmental blogs are characterized by employment of neologisms, colloquialisms and idiomatic expressions. Enumeration, parenthesis and repetition are expressive means most frequently met on syntactic level. Being comparatively poor in stylistic devices on syntactic level, environmental blogs are extremely rich in figures of speech, namely metaphors, epithets and metonymies.

Keywords: environmental blogs, genres, stylistic analysis, environmental awareness, human-nature relationship

Introduction. Due to significant scientific and technological advances over centuries, the environment has been treated as a passive object and its resources have been ruthlessly exploited. False beliefs based on the assumption that humankind has a superior status over the rest of Earth's inhabitants have sharpened the contradictions between human activity and natural processes thus posing serious threats to the existence of human civilization. For these reasons various attempts on local, governmental and international levels are being made to remedy the situation. The environmental movement, which has sprung up in response to global environmental challenges, channels a lot of efforts into spreading information on the most urgent environmental issues aiming to change the human-nature relationship paradigm. With the emergence and ever-increasing popularity of the Internet a dramatic increase in environmental awareness has been observed throughout the world. This can be explained by the fact that recent years have seen a virtual explosion of people's engagement in Internet communication which covers all spheres of human life, environmental issues included. Among the variety of other Internet genres, blogs on environmental issues have become an effective means of drawing Internet users' attention to the problems of safe environment, endangered species, clean energy, resource depletion, sustainability and a host of other global environmental challenges.

Literature Review. Blogs or web logs were created in 1997 by Jorn Barger. Initially they were designed as lists of websites that the blogger found to be of interest and wished to share with others [1, p. 18]. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines blog as "a website where a person writes regularly about recent events or topics that interest them, usually with photos and links to other websites that they find interesting [4, p. 150].There are many different kinds of weblogs ranging from personal online journals to sites that track news on specific topics. With increasing use of audio and video technology there appeared new sub-genres such as photoblogs [3, p. 31].

Looking more specifically at blog classifications S. Herring, L. Scheidt, E. Bonus, and E. Wright sum up the previous research findings. Thus, R. Blood's classifies blogs into three types: 1) *filters*, which include links to other sites or blogs of interest the content of which is external to the blogger; 2) *personal journals*, the content of which is internal to the blogger's thoughts and internal workings; 3) *notebooks,* which may contain either external or internal content and are distinguished by longer, focused essays. S. Krishnamurthy proposes a classification of blogs into four basic types according to two dimensions: personal vs. topical, and individual vs. community. S. Herring and her colleagues classify blogs into personal journals, filters, k-logs (knowledge), mixed purpose or other [2, p. 2-4]. S. Nowson distinguishes three types of blogs: news, commentary and journal [3, p. 31-35]. The last classification is of a particular interest to this study, because environmental blogs are commentaries by nature, i.e. they always express the author's opinion and his attitude to the information posted.

The legitimacy of the claim that blogs are an independent genre is premised on the assumption that recurrent electronic practices can meaningfully be characterized as genres [2, p. 2]. In traditional rhetoric genre is understood as relatively stable communication acts [5]. With the advent of the Internet many off-line genres carry over into the web-genres. Consequently, a question arises whether Internet genres and more specifically, blogs are copies of their off-line counterparts or a unique phenomenon created by new communication environment.

In this respect O. Goroshko and O. Zemlyakova argue that modern linguists are faced with three major challenges: 1) complexity and multidimensional character of Internet genres; 2) likelihood that Internet genres will become obsolete given the speed of technological change and highly dynamic nature of the Internet, which will make any attempt at classification quickly outdated; 3) Internet genre studies are still in their infancy [6, p. 235].

Therefore it is not surprising that linguists apply different criteria to Internet genre classification. Our analysis of the existing approaches to this problem suggests that blogs can be accounted for as a separate Internet genre based on the following criteria: 1) principle of interaction – one-to-many; 2) communication function – presentation; 3) structure and composition – discourse formative i.e. blog entries follow communication rules strictly restricted by certain technical parameters; 4) origin – hybrid that shares the features of traditional diaries and utilizes the opportunities Internet offers.

Objective. The objective of this paper is to study visual and linguistic peculiarities of environmental blogs as one of the genres of environmental Internet discourse.

Material and Methods. The present study is based on the analysis of a random sample of 100 environmental blog entries posted in blog sections on official web-pages of international non-governmental organizations (Green-

peace International and Fauna & Flora International), Environmental News Network website and the environmental blogs treehugger.com and grist.org.

To study the linguistic peculiarities of environmental blogs we employed lingvostylistic analysis and elements of quantitative analysis at all levels of the language system.

Results and discussion. Given that blog entries as other Internet texts are mainly perceived visually, their graphic representation is of a paramount importance. Our study shows that the graphic segmentation of blogs covering environmental issues is based on a system of hyperlinks. In many cases, a blog is a structural part of a website and is represented by a logbook i.e daily chronicle, divided by category (agriculture, climate change, forests, nuclear, oceans, toxics, etc.) and usually contains photos and video clips or photo reports. In addition, an environmental blog may have a permanent author or be anonymous. The navigation through a blog entry is accomplished by clicking either on its title or on the icon *Continue reading.* Environmental blogs are extremely interactive as the user can leave a comment or a complaint (*reply, Flag Abuse*), press "like" button or share its content in social networks (*share this*).

Another important factor in visual design noted in the analyzed environmental blogs is their colour palette. It attracts the attention of potential recipients and plays a key role in information processing. In addition, colour serves symbolic, constructive and decorative purposes, creates appropriate psychological mood, and facilitates formation of a desired effect. Close inspection of the environmental blogs studied shows that green, blue, yellow, red and orange colours dominate, which is not surprising since these colours symbolize nature, hope, joy, peace etc. In our opinion, they reflect the activities aimed at preservation of safe environment and help environmental blogs stand out well against the Internet information abyss.

The study of the linguistic peculiarities in the given environmental blogs on morphological level is based on the analysis of the usage of notional and structural parts of speech, namely nouns, adjectives, verbs, pronouns and adverbs. A quantitative study of noun usage in environmental blogs has shown that both countable and uncountable nouns are used in plural forms (40%) which aim at showing the scale of environmental problems: *flood waters; oceans; seas; superstorms; emissions* etc. There is one observation to be made here. Blog authors very often resort to enumeration of plural nouns: *winds and currents; governments, companies and investors; scientists, academics, analysts, insurers, lawyers, regulators, and activists; droughts, floods and heavy rains* etc. This can be explained by bloggers' attempts to attract Internet users' attention to natural as well as man-made catastrophes and their dreadful consequences. Besides, environmental blogs are characterized by extensive usage of possessive case. Whereas the structure N of N is dominant (91%), N's structure (9%) is carried over into the portrayal of natural processes and phenomena thus personifying and endowing them with features intrinsic to a person: *Earth's resources, nature's game, Earth's biosphere, nature's forces, the world's bees* etc.

Pronoun frequency usage analysis gives us grounds to say that in environmental blogs personal pronouns "I" and "we" are most frequently met (21, 8% and 16, 4% respectively) which is explained by the fact that most bloggers share their own experience and impressions concerning their participation in environmental movement:..*I've been there when the bulldozers have rolled in, and I've seen the destruction first hand. But I cannot stop these machines by myself. As a Greenpeace forest campaigner here in Indonesia, I can tell you we need voices from all around the world.* Personal pronoun "we" serves as a means of laying the responsibility for all the environmental challenges on everyone. Similarly, personal pronoun "you" (12%) induces Internet users to communication and action: to support certain environmental undertakings, donate money, sign a petition etc.: *Wherever you are, you can help Sini and the team and be part of this action by joining the movement, by sharing the photos, or by tweeting your support; If you have thoughts or comments on this action, we'd love to hear. What would you do to protect the Arctic?* Personal pronoun "they" (7, 3%) sets off contrast between natural world and humankind unveiling crimes against nature.

Special place in the studied environmental blogs is occupied by possessive pronouns "our" (4,3%) and "their" (7,4%) which are used as a reminder that only cooperation on all levels can ensure environmental protection: *However, despite the huge significance of our oceans, more than 99% of the high seas are still unprotected due to a lack of political will and necessary rules and regulations.*

A considerable part in environmental blogs under analysis is characterized by the employment of comparative (54, 6%) and superlative (37, 7%) degrees of comparison of adjectives. Notably, 3, 7% of comparisons are formed with the help of the structures like: comparative and comparative, ordinal numeral + superlative, as…as, n-times much as, the comparative, the comparative: *the second highest rise, the 10th warmest year, 20 times more potent that CO_2* etc. Degrees of comparison play an important part in portrayal of consequences of nature exploitation and at the same time provide ways to tackle environmental problems: *easier on environment, greener household, stricter, more common environment norms etc.*

Adjectives in positive degree are used mainly to unmask the activities that put environment and our future in jeopardy: *hazardous, illegal, criminal, dangerous, catastrophic* etc. Adjectives with positive connotation, on the contrary, describe the beauty of the nature and its vulnerability: *magnificent, amazing, beautiful, fragile, tiny, delicate etc.*

Another peculiarity of environmental blogs is the extensive use of adverbs of manner (66,4%) which in combination with adjectives in positive degree significantly contributes to environmental awareness formation: *extremely hazardous, criminally unsafe, irreparably injured* etc.

The study of tense usage peculiarities in environmental blogs has shown that Past Simple (483) and Future Simple (300) are dominant in this genre. In our opinion this can be explained by the fact that blog authors describe their past experiences as environmental activists and warn humanity about the possible consequences of modern lifestyle: *plans to extract and burn more and more carbon*

will continue to do irreparable damage to life on our planet.

Touching upon the category of voice, it should be noted that in most cases bloggers resort to active voice which gives them a chance to speak freely about the event or a piece of news even if they are not pleasant. Passive voice, on the contrary, generalizes the information and gives it a scientific touch: *A mind-boggling sum of about $800* **for each person on the planet** *is invested into fossil fuel companies through the global capital markets alone.* Of a particular interest to this study is the usage of imperative mood. Our observations show that bloggers employ imperatives to encourage Internet users to join the discussion of environmental challenges and become environmental campaign participants. It should be noted that in many cases imperatives sound more like a plea or a request rather than imperatives due to the usage of the word "please": *For even more ideas on creating a greener household, please click here.*

On a close inspection of lexical peculiarities of environmental blogs under the study, we observed the usage of neologisms, colloquialisms and idiomatic expressions.

Neologisms related to environment in environmental blogs fall into lexical and phraseological. The findings of the study show that affixation plays an important part in the appearance of lexical neologisms. Among most productive affixes are prefixes eco-, bio-, non-, anti-, re-, dis-, over- (*recycling, eco-business bioenergy, deforestation, overconsumption, non-polluting,* a*nti-fracking,*) and suffixes -ism, -ation, -able (*decomposable, environmentalism, conservation*). Composition is another productive means of word formation in environmental blogs: *greenlight, greenwash, ecowatch* etc. Certain groups of words are abbreviated, namely: names of environmental organizations (*WWF, DEP, EEB*), environmental laws and programmes (CAP, REDD+), certification standards (ASF, CSA), chemicals (PVC, BPA), power plants (NPP, EPR), chemical processes in the atmosphere (GHG) and environmental monitoring systems (ForestGEO).

New phraselogical units appear in response to urgent environmental challenges and touch upon such spheres as: alternative energy sources (*green alternative energy, renewable energy, fuel consumption*), environmental pollution (*air pollution, water pollution, nuclear waste, radioactive waste*), species extinction (*endangered species, threatened species, imperiled species, rare species, iconic species, globally endangered species*), climate change (*global warming, climate change, climate chaos, global heating*), biological and nuclear weapons (*biological weapons, nuclear weapons age*), GE foodstuff production (*anti-GE, GE investments, GE ingredients, GE shopper's guide*), environmental awareness formation (*ecology-conscious age, green life, environmental responsibility*) and sustainable living (*sustainable world, sustainable agriculture, global sustainable consumption, sustainable economy, sustainability index*).

Colloquialisms make environmental blog posts more expressive and at the same time shorten the distance between the blogger and his audience: *The prospect of an oil and gas export boom is a dubious prize the New Zealand government is embracing, eager to beef up its export earnings at the expense of the global climate.*

The analysis of idiomatic expressions gives us sufficient ground to state that they can be used both without any changes and with changes in their structure: *a bitter pill to swallow; Labels on cosmetics and body care products are a tough code to crack* instead of *a tough nut to crack;... beautiful fashion that doesn't cost the earth* instead of *cost a fortune* etc.

A detailed study of environmental blog stylistic peculiarities on syntactic level shows that enumeration (*Meanwhile, we have dammed some 30,000 rivers, drained aquifers, dried lakes, polluted our water tables, and heated our atmosphere*) (46,2%), parenthesis (26,3%) (*Palm oil, an ingredient found in almost half of supermarket products, is the largest driver of deforestation in Indonesia*) and repetition (10,9%) (*In the United States, more than half of the greenhouse gas comes from transportation and more than half of that is from personal vehicles*) are most frequently met among expressive means. As for stylistic devices, surprisingly, bloggers do not often resort to them on syntactic level. Sporadically such stylistic devices as parceling, anaphora and epiphora can be used: *Shortly before we were taken to shore, Mannes and I spoke to our Consul, Martin Groenstege. A friendly man who gave us hope.*

At the same time environmental blogs are rich in semasiological expressive means and stylistic devices, namely metaphors (46,5%), epithets (24%) and metonymies (9,5%).

Close inspection of metaphors has shown that they depict human-nature relationship via several domains: military operations (*Right now we're losing the battle against climate change...*), gambling (S*hell has already burnt $5 billion of shareholders' money on their Arctic gamble*), sport (*Oil company cheerleaders proclaiming huge supplies of oil are dead wrong*), health care (*slow the rise of the ocean and heal the planet*), cooking (*I am there to add a pinch of public participation*) and driving (*We're not just speeding down the highway toward a cliff, we are accelerating, as we see by looking at the annual greenhouse gas increases...*). Epithets in environmental blogs unveil the scale of environmental problems and describe nature's beauty: *But in recent times, amphibians have suddenly found themselves in very dangerous and uncertain waters; The first strike was the shocking failure of governments to protect fragile marine areas in Antarctica.* Metonymy serves as a means of attracting attention to certain spheres of human life that produce negative impact on environment: *While this year's 'runway' was sprinkled with Armanis and Diors, Twilight star Kellan Lutz and former Bond girl Olga Kurylenko made fashion statements of a different kind - turning the red carpet green with unique, sustainable designs created by Red Carpet Green Dress.*

Conclusion. As the above discussion shows, environmental blogs are an integral part of environmental awareness formation process. By employment of expressive means and stylistic devices on all levels of the language system, blog authors inform the world of environmental challenges, unmask environmental crimes and reshape the way humanity treats nature and its resources. Our analysis illustrates that, on morphological level, environmental blogs make extensive usage of plural forms of nouns, degrees of comparison, Past Simple and Future Simple

tenses and imperative mood. Lexical stylistic peculiarities of environmental blogs are characterized by utilization of neologisms, colloquialisms and idiomatic expressions. Enumeration, parenthesis and repetition are expressive means most frequently met on syntactic level. Being comparatively poor in stylistic devices on syntactic level, environmental blogs are extremely rich in figures of speech, namely metaphors, epithets and metonymies. This richness and diversity of expressive means and stylistic devices in environmental blogs, along with their global reach, contribute greatly to the understanding of and finding solutions to global environmental problems humanity faces in the XXI century.

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Гудзь Н.А. Графические и лингвистические особенности блогов экологической тематики

Аннотация. В статье описаны графические и лингвистические особенности блогов экологической тематики. Наш анализ показывает, что графическая сегментация блогов, охватывающих экологические проблемы, базируется на системе гиперссылок. На морфологическом уровне в блогах экологической тематики широко используются множественное число существительных, степени сравнения прилагательных, временные формы Past Simple и Future Simple и повелительное наклонение. Лексические стилистические особенности блогов экологической тематики характеризуются использованием неологизмов, разговорной лексики и идиоматических выражений. Перечисление, вставные предложения и повтор – наиболее часто встречающиеся выразительные средства на синтаксическом уровне. Блоги экологичекой тематики чрезвычайно богаты фигурами речи, а именно метафорами, эпитетами и метонимией.

Ключевые слова: экологические блоги, жанры, стилистический анализ, экологическое сознание, система отношений "человек-природа"