

Title: The text of menu as a specific speech genre

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Global, political and economical changes in Russia have affected almost every sphere of life, including the food service industry. In recent years we have witnessed a significant increase in the number of private restaurants and cafés in cities throughout the Russian Federation, and due to such intense competition, restaurant owners are forced to pay more attention to the text and design of their menus. As a result, the menu itself evokes interest and becomes an additional means of advertising the product.

This paper presents the results of a comprehensive analysis of twenty Soviet restaurant menus and fifty contemporary Russian restaurant menus. The study examines these texts through the prism of Jakobson's model of linguistic functions. Within this paradigm, the presence or absence of certain functions in a text serve as a basis for categorizing the texts by type.

Menus during the Soviet era tended to be mere lists of available dishes referred to with stylistically neutral labels (*Shchi iz kisloj kapusty, Borshch so svininoy*), and there was little variation in the menus of different restaurants. The texts of Soviet menus contain a single dominant *referential* function, and thus the text can be specified as an informative text. The menus of today's Russian restaurants aim to focus the customer's attention on both the dish described and character of the restaurant itself. In these texts we find the presence of four to six linguistic functions: *emotive* (e.g. the use of diminutives (*kartoshechka, pirozhok*), superlative degree of adjectives (*velikolepneyshee pirozhnoe*), words that connote 'tasty, well-cooked' (*navaristyj, rassypchatyj, aromatnyj, vosxittitel'nyj, pal'chiki oblizhesh'*)), *conative* (*appellative*) (the use of second person personal pronouns (*tol'ko dlja vas*)), *phatic* (*Dobro pozhalovat', prixodite eshche*), *metalingual* (*metasemiotic*) (use of old Russian alphabet or print, pictures, etc.) and even the *poetic* function (e.g. dishes are named after famous Russian cultural figures). As I will demonstrate in this paper, the text of the contemporary restaurant menu functions as an advertisement designed to accomplish the following: (1) attract attention, (2) convince, by appealing to reason or emotion, and (3) result in the purchase of the product. These conclusions will be illustrated through presentation of a series of contrastive examples from this body of texts.