TEXT WORLD THEORY AND TEXT COMPREHENSION

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У статті розглянуто переваги застосування дослідницьких практик, напрацьованих у рамках когнітивної парадигми, до вивчення особливостей репрезентації форматів знань в художньому тексті. Авторка аналізує закономірності текстової об'єктивації структурованих знань через призму кореляції мовного, соціокультурного та концептуального аспектів. Вивчення взаємозв'язків між різними моделями світу, наявними в текстовій площині, доводить правомірність урахування прагматичного наповнення мовних засобів, задіяних у репрезентації системи загальних та соціокультурних знань, вербалізованих у текстовому просторі, та наголошує на необхідності подальшого опрацювання методики інтерпретації художнього тексту, що враховує результати міждисциплінарних студій лінгво-когнітивного аспекту дискурсу / тексту.

Ключові слова: формат знання, інтерпретаційний контекст, текстова модель світу, об'єктивація структурованих знань, інтерпретація художнього тексту.

В статье рассматриваются преимущества применения исследовательских практик, разработанных в рамках когнитивной парадигмы, для исследования особенностей репрезентации форматов знаний в художественном тексте. Автор анализирует закономерности текстовой объективации структурированных знаний через призму корреляции языкового, социокультурного и концептуального аспектов. Изучение взаимосвязей между разными моделями мира в текстовом пространстве доказывает правомерность исследования прагматического наполнения языковых средств, задействованных в репрезентации системы общих и социокультурных знаний в тексте, и подчеркивает необходимость дальнейшей разработки методики интерпретации художественного текста с учетом результатов междисциплинарных исследований лингво-когнитивного аспекта дискурса / текста.

Ключевые слова: формат знаний, интерпретационный контекст, текстовая модель мира, объективация структурированных знаний, интерпретация художественного текста.

The article discusses advantages of applying cognitive approach research practices to the study of peculiarities of representation of knowledge formats in the narrative. The author analyzes the regularities of objectivization of structured knowledge through the correlation of language, socio-cultural and conceptual aspects. The study of the interrelations between different world models, present in the text continuum, proves relevance of considering pragmatics of the linguistic means involved in the representation of general and socio-cultural knowledge in the narrative, and emphasizes the necessity of further development of text interpretation methods based on the results of interdisciplinary studies.

Key words: knowledge format, context of interpretation, text world model, objectivization of structured knowledge, narrative comprehension.

Cognitive linguistics, that aims at the study of language, conceptual systems, human cognition, and general meaning construction, is considered a modern school of linguistic theory and practice that utilizes a wide range of methods converging from different cognitive sciences. In the early 1970s cognitive linguistics evolved from the theories, partly philosophical in nature, designed by Ch. Fillmore, R. Lakoff, R. Langacker, E. Rosch [6; 9; 10; 12], though as a linguistic theory cognitive linguistics is believed to be closely connected with the findings from cognitive psychology, whose major postulates were offered by L. Talmy [14].

R. Jackendoff, G. Fauconnier, R. Dirven, D. Tannen, R. Lakoff formulated basic theoretical foundations of cognitive linguistics, still the field is not so much a single closely-articulated theory as an approach that has a common set of assumptions, commitments and guiding principles, due to its

focus on the research of the complex relationship between human language, the mind and socio-physical experience that results in conceptualization and categorization of the reality that finds its manifestation in multilevel verbal representation of conceptual entities [8; 4; 3; 15; 9].

According to G. Fauconnier, at present cognitive linguistics deals mainly with the study of the ways of structuring basic conceptual categories such as space and time, scenes and events, entities and processes, motion and location, force and causation. So, cognitive linguistics addresses the structuring of ideational and affective categories attributed to cognitive agents, such as attention and perspective, volition and intention. Moreover, in doing so, it develops a rich conception of grammar that reflects fundamental cognitive abilities: the ability to form structured conceptualizations with multiple levels of organization, to conceive a situation at varying levels of abstraction, to establish correspondences between facets of different structures, and to construe the same situation in alternate ways [5, p. 1–2].

Given that the semantics of the linguistic means contributes to the overall content and focal message of the literary text, that includes a complex of different models (physical, social, and psychological world models) constructed of a set of presuppositions about different domains of reality which are the result of collective and individual conceptualization, presented in the narrative in a special way, narrative interpretation is to be based on the conceptual mode. Perception of information is conditioned by a number of diverse factors, social, historical, cultural, political, psychological being the most important ones. Thus the importance of the study of mechanisms of adequate decoding of information represented in the narrative continuum from the linguistic and cognitive perspectives predetermines the topicality of the research that explores factors connected with the perception, comprehension and interpretation of a literary text.

Expectations, beliefs, attitudes, values, prior knowledge, education, age, gender, life experience, individual characteristics, emotions and other variables, present in social contexts and in a concrete communicative situation, that are the elements of the situational context of interpretation (according to Dijk, 2009), precondition regularities of processing of the information manifested in the text structure [2]. The aim of the article is to study peculiarities of the literary text comprehension so that to reveal dependencies between different processes involved in the interpretation and understanding of the narrative. For interpretation to be relevant, the approach that focuses on the research of the text is to deal with a number of tasks that are to be integrated in order to ensure adequate processing of information at the multi-level system of text semantics:

– to study the nature of meaning,

– to investigate functions of language devices involved in the verbalization of conceptual content,

– to examine the effect of pragmatics on the understanding of the verbally represented knowledge structures.

Recent advances in cognitive linguistics led to the evolvement of a number of theories that address fundamental postulates in the cognitive and communicative analyses of language to further deepen the understanding of complex interrelations between cognition, thought and their verbal representation in discourse / text. One of the effective approaches, worked out by J. Gavins, P. Werth, deals with a range of narrative-related issues within the integrative framework is the text world theory (TWT) that focuses on conceptual structures and their language embodiment in linguistic, social and cultural dimensions of communicative interaction [7, p. 17].

Though the TWT has been used fruitfully to study literary prose, to explain how fictional worlds are created and developed in the narrative, a complex issue of the connections and dependencies between the textual world and the world outside the text is still to be examined properly. Applying the TWT approach to the study of the discoursal-cognitive aspect of the passage under analysis provides its accurate interpretation, though the overlapping of real and imaginary worlds is obvious in the passage from the introduction to the collection of short stories by J. Harris:

An interviewer once asked me this question*: **If you were** to be stranded on a desert island, what three items **would you take**?*

__I gave this frivolous answer__: A cat, a hat and a piece of string. Partly because I liked the jaunty, careless bounce of the phrase, and partly because __each item has many potential uses__, on its own or separately, which makes my choice more than a sum of its parts.

__I'd bring__ the cat for company. The hat for shelter from the sun. The piece of string has multiple purposes, including to amuse the cat, or to keep the hat on in a high wind. __There's also a scenario__ in which I use the hat and the piece of string to make a simple fish-trap (presumably to feed the cat); or a less appealing one in which I strangle the cat with a piece of string and cook it for lunch, using the hat as a makeshift tureen. (To be fair, __I can't imagine__ myself ever wanting to eat a cat, but who knows what might happen __if you were stranded__ for __long enough__ on __a desert island__?) It occurred to me that I could __probably think up a hundred similar stories__ featuring just those three items (20, p. 9–10).

The linguistic devices in bold mark the attributes of the world models (real and fictional) and signal switches between them. The study of the pragmatic characteristics of these linguistic elements proves that the comprehension of the extract and its interpretation potential is multi-faceted and many-layered due to the partial overlap of the world models, which necessitates identifying essential characteristics of the events and situations, characters and the world perception, actions and their temporal and spatial parameters. In terms of text comprehension the main peculiarity of the extract is the overlapping of the fictional world, resulting in its deictic proximity, created by the complex of linguistic representations of interwoven life experiences of the author and the imaginary world models that are the work of her creative imagination.

Knowledge structures represented in language are either of universal or of individual character. People's understanding and processing of information is primarily determined by the general knowledge of the world, though knowledge formats are not always language based. P. Stockwell states that the cognitive framework puts the choice of different level language means engaged in creating the literary text into a new perspective as its focus is on the study of the role of generalized structures and notions that make the conceptual basis of the narrative [13]. Due to the application of the cognitive approach the functional potential of the linguistic devices is revealed to the full.

Scientific analysis of cognition and communication is based on the fundamental assumption that language users employ structures of expectations, often in the form of an abstract or generalized situation that is usually built on definite social, historical, cultural, and institutional information [2; 16; 18]. It is the semantic aspect of narrative comprehension processes that makes the foundation of relevant interpretation, with emphasis on the study of macro-structures, that is to deal with the global level of the narrative. For comprehension to be adequate these factors are to be explored in the perception and interpretation of any verbal message, while the awareness of socio-cultural knowledge ensures adequate understanding of communication due to its inherent peculiarity of being constructed of shared presuppositions about different domains of the world, that are the result of the collective conceptualization by the language community, regardless of the obvious 'openness' of interpretation in every new act of reading and comprehension in every new context [16; 18].

According to T. van Dijk, context models organize the way discourse is structured and adapted to the whole communication situation in the same way as more general mental models organize how we adapt our action to the social situation and environment [2]. Societal or situational structures can only affect discourse through the mediation or the interface of the mental representations of language users, contexts are not some kinds of objective condition or direct cause, but rather subjective constructs designed and continuously updated in interaction by participants as members of groups and communities we believe that the concept of context models is instrumental in the study of discourse attributes that cannot be explained by theories that assume that discourse and narrative texts are determined by social situations that correlate with the world model. Thus world models in the text continuum are of sociocultural nature.

As to socio-cultural models, these contain psychological features, they include alongside the physical world two other major components – societal world and individual or personal world, which is subject to constant modification due to the changes in the amount of knowledge of the community or / and an individual [1].

Another extract exemplifies the argument that the notion "world model" reflects a number of characteristics and variables, such as context, connections across social, cognitive and discourse dimensions of the language proper, its functional representation in speech, and the very communication process either among individuals and across social groups. World models are structured by a number of subcomponents, the range of which is predetermined by a variety of factors and parameters, interrelated and interdependent due to their ability to represent diverse experiences, knowledge and information to ensure relevant perception and interpretation of the narrative.

***Stories are like Russian dolls:** open them up, and in each one you'll find another story. This particular story* was written *when **I was in the Congo with Müdecins Sans Frontiures. Why I was there** in the first place **is a story in itself**, but **while I was in Brazzaville I met a gang of small boys** who **had devised** an ingenious (and perilous) means of earning a living. They **would gather** by the river under the veranda of one of the city's few surviving restaurants and, for a coin or a handful of scraps, **would entertain** the diners by leaping into the rapids at the river's most dangerous points and riding the current downstream. These children – none of them older than ten years old – **would risk** their lives **dozens of times a day**, often for nothing more than a chicken bone or a piece of bread. What's more, they seemed to enjoy it (20, p. 11).*

The postulate that the structure of socio-cultural knowledge is organized in sequences of prototypical events, characterized by a number of features is related directly to assumption that it is conditioned by the nature of entities it represents [19]. Knowledge formats such as frame, script, schemata contain structures of expectations that are based on previous experiences as they are built on cultural and societal information about different actions, routines and situations that are expected to be perceived in conventional ways. Socio-cultural knowledge is manifested in the narrative with the help of various linguistic means, while processing a literary text the reader makes use of the abstract model of reality, the general conceptual code, a theory of the world, that are transferred upon the narrative and are involved in the complex interpretation process that predetermines the use of the mechanisms, acquired previously in the process of experiencing the real world.

Perceiving information presented in discourse / text language users deal with it in a special way that is predetermined by expectations, beliefs, attitudes, prior knowledge, individual characteristics, emotions and other variables, connected with the knowledge of the context and the background of the communicants. Experiencing diverse situations people cognize the physical world, this way knowledge of its basic particularities are made while abstractions and generalizations are derived eventually to be used in the future to interpret events and situations, verbal messages and psychological states. Socio-cultural knowledge, organized in sequences of prototypical events and characterized by dynamic change due to the nature and ontological status of the entities they represent, provides foundation for the mechanisms of adequate understanding of social and ethnographic peculiarities of human cognition.

In conclusion, as interpretation of events and situations is conceptual, being based on processing encoded information present in the narrative continuum in the form of knowledge structures/ formats, via a number of different societal or individual factors, that include a system of expectations, beliefs, attitudes, prior knowledge, individual characteristics, emotions and other variables, the study of interrelations and dependencies between culture, language and cognition is of vital importance. Its complexity is preconditioned by a large amount of knowledge, which the members of the language community acquire and share, these being stored (imprinted) in the knowledge formats and structures. In addition, to interpret discourse / narrative content adequately in the context of a concrete situation is to be regarded in accordance with conventional rules and procedures.

The socio-cognitive approach to the interpretation of the textual meanings that accumulates findings and results of interdisciplinary research ensures adequate decoding of the information in the narrative as it aims at the study of a broad range of phenomena such as the nature of meaning, the role of language elements, the effect of context and pragmatics on the understanding of the verbally manifested structures. Focus on the abstract model of reality, the general conceptual code, the world model encoded in the literary text facilitates comprehension and interpretation, the process predetermining the use of the mechanisms and algorithms, acquired previously in experiencing the real world. The perspectives of further study of the interpretation potential and dependences of knowledge structures representation in the narrative are related to the new prospects offered by the TWT as a framework that will ensure relevant narrative comprehension within the discoursal-cognitive dimension and will facilitate exploration of rules, connections, correlations, and switches between the fictional world and the real world in a certain situational context of discourse / text comprehension.

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