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TEXT STUDIES FROM THE SOCIO-COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

Стаття присвячена визначенню особливостей застосування соціо-когнітивного підходу до вивчення дискурсу і тексту в рамках теорії контексту, який розглядається як суб'єктивний конструкт, створений учасниками комунікативних ситуацій, що представлені імпліцитно в тексті низкою об'єктивованих когнітивних моделей. Використання контекстуального аналізу при дослідженні фрагментів тексту дозволяє з'ясувати і пояснити роль когнітивних моделей у процесі соціальної комунікативної взаємодії.

Ключові слова: *художній простір тексту, когнітивна модель, комунікативна взаємодія, контекст, фонові знання.*

В статье рассматриваются особенности применения социо-когнитивного подхода к изучению дискурса и текста в рамках теории контекста, под которым понимают субъективный конструкт, созданный участниками коммуникативных ситуаций, представленных имплицитно в тексте объективированными когнитивными моделями. Использование контекстуального анализа при исследовании текстовых фрагментов позволяет установить и объяснить роль когнитивных моделей в процессе социального коммуникативного взаимодействия.

Ключевые слова: *художественное пространство текста, когнитивная модель, коммуникативное взаимодействие, контекст, фоновые знания.*

The article deals with the relevance of a socio-cognitive approach to discourse and text studies is shown through the theory of context, regarded as subjective participants' construct of communicative situations, that is made explicit in terms of cognitive models. The application of the contextual analysis of text fragments reveals how such models predetermine and explain social communicative interaction.

Key words: *textual world model, cognitive model, communicative interaction, context, background knowledge.*

It is through language that constructing and communicating meaning reflects peculiarities of thinking, cognitive processes, thus, social communication correlates and associates with linguistic manifestations of thought [1; 3; 4; 6; 12]. Cognitive science is involved in intensive studying and modelling of thinking that lies behind language and goes far beyond it, still language reflects the process in certain ways, while cognition predetermines and supports the dynamics of language use, language change and language organization [2; 7; 8; 10].

When people are involved in any language activity they draw unconsciously on vast cognitive resources, numerous models and frames, multiple connections, huge bulks of information and engage in creative mappings, transfers, and elaborations.

Application of the contextual analysis to the study of discourse and text reveals how such models predetermine social interaction that cannot be accounted for within the traditional approaches. Context models help provide an explicit theory of relevance and the situational appropriateness of discourse, and also serve a basis for theories of text and communication.

According to Teun A. Van Dijk, unlike discourse or interaction, contexts are usually not 'observable' at all, whether traditionally defined as situational or societal constraints or as defined as mental constructs. Incidentally, text and talk are only 'observable' in a very specific sense of 'being public', presupposing shared members' knowledge, because obviously the grammatical and other discursive structures, including those of meaning, cannot be directly 'seen', but are also results of the interpretations of the participants [12]. Still contexts may be considered observable via their manifestation in discourse, or via the influence of discourse on social situations, in case of political or social/public events.

Thus, cognition includes viewpoints and reference points, figure-ground / profile-base / landmark-trajector organization, metaphorical, analogical, and other mappings, idealized models, framing, construal, mental spaces, counterpart connections, roles, prototypes, metonymy, polysemy, conceptual blending, fictive motion, force dynamics [5; 9; 11].

The cognitive constructs, operations, and dynamics, and the understanding of conceptual systems have become a central focus of linguistic analysis, texts being viewed as one of many sources of relevant data. Nevertheless, methods must focus on contextual aspects of language use and non-linguistic cognition as well. This means studying full discourse, language in context, inferences actually drawn by participants in an exchange, implicit assumptions and constructs, in other words, examples of manifestations of conceptual thought in discourse and text.

It is commonly thought that different operations apply to various levels of linguistic analysis: syntax governs the sentence, and semantics provides it compositionally with a meaning; at a higher level, other operations are at work to produce implicatures, derived meaning, indirect speech acts; then rhetorical and figurative devices such as metaphor and metonymy are involved. Still it is argued that frames, schemas and prototypes account for word level and sentence level, syntactic/semantic properties in cognitive and construction grammar and they guide thought and action more generally [6; 9; 11]. Conceptual blending and analogy play a key role in syntax and morphology, in word and sentence level semantics and at higher levels [5; 8; 10; 12]. Similarly, force dynamics and fictive motion operate at all language levels.

The cognitive processes and the linguistic means engaged are revealed in the text fragments. In this study they are represented in the extracts from the novel "Thinks" by David Lodge:

… 'What is cognitive science, exactly?
'The systemic study of the mind,' he says. 'It's the last frontier of scientific enquiry.'
'Really?'
'The physicists have pretty well got the cosmos taped. It's only a matter of time before they come up with a unified theory. The discovery of DNA have transformed biology once and for all. Consciousness is the biggest white space on the map of human knowledge. Did you know this is the Decade of the Brain?'

'No. Who said so?'

'Well, I think it was President Bush, as a matter of fact,' says Ralph. 'But he was speaking for the scientific community. All kinds of people have got interested in the subject lately – physicists, biologists, zoologists, neurologists, evolutionary psychologists, mathematicians ...'

'Which of those are you?' Helen asks.

'I started out as a philosopher. I read Moral Sciences at Cambridge, and did a PhD on the Philosophy of Mind. Then I went to America on a fellowship and got into computers and AI –'

'AI?'

'Artificial Intelligence.' .... [13, c. 36].

It is obvious that in the process of social and communicative interaction both speakers – Ralph and Helen – engage in situations/constructions on the basis of linguistic and extralinguistic structures to achieve effective communication.

It is so due to a number of factors, namely the cultural, contextual, and cognitive substrate, on which the language forms operate, is sufficiently uniform across interlocutors to allow for a reasonable degree of consistency in the unfolding of the prompted meaning constructions.

Analysis proves that uniformity works across linguistic levels, the word, the sentence, the sentence and its context, the whole discourse and general reasoning. Still, there are other generalizations, that transcend specific cognitive domains. Cognitive linguists have argued extensively for the cognitive generality of the mappings, correspondences, bindings, integration, pragmatic functions, framing, force dynamics, prototype structures, and knowledge structures based on background knowledge that underlie the construction of meaning as reflected by language use [12]. Thus cognitive linguistics is a powerful means of revealing and explaining general aspects of human cognition.

To study context in relation to discourse involves all aspects of social situations on the one hand and all the variable structures of language on the other. The study of context forms an essential part in linguistic research. Many concepts of context, such as "context of culture", "context of situation", "register" and "genre" are being re-examined. Adequate interpretation of the information that is shared in communication is possible only due to the background knowledge of the speakers. In the example below the references such as *the film Ghost, Whoopi Goldberg, Demi Moore* are the indications of the temporal parameter that creates the effect of reality in combination with other language devices.

SATURDAY 22ⁿᵈ Feb. Last night the film Ghost was on television after the News, and I decided to watch it, although I had seen it before ...

The few details of the movie that had lodged in my memory were the special effects when the character died: for instance, the hero gets up from the ground apparently unscathed and only realizes that he's dead when he sees his distraught girlfriend cradling his own lifeless body in her arms; and when the baddies die they are immediately set upon by dark gibbering shapes that drag them screaming off to hell (surprisingly satisfying, that). And I remembered that Whoopi Goldberg had been very funny in the role of the fraudulent medium who is disconcerted to find herself genuinely in touch with the spirit world. These things were just as effective the second time round. What I wasn't prepared for was the way the love story would overwhelm me. Demi Moore, whom I've always considered a rather wooden actress, seemed incredibly moving as the bereaved heroine...[13, c. 20-21].

The main theoretical assumption of this study is that it is the definition, interpretation, representation or construction by the participants of the social situation, in terms of subjective context models, that influences how they speak, understand and react in the communicative interaction. In other words, societal or situational structures are representations of language users' experience and mental/ cognitive models of real situations, stored in their memory. Based on this theory, a different concept of context is worked out, context being defined as subjective constructs designed and ongoingly updated in interaction by participants as members of groups and communities [12]. In the elaboration, the theory is seen to have an important concept 'context model', a notion van Dijk derives from "mental models". A mental model is a subjective and socially based construct of the participants about the for-them-relevant properties of a social situation. Thus, context models organize the way our discourse is strategically structured and adapted to the whole communication situation in the same way as more general mental models organize how language users adapt their action to the social situation and environment. Evidently, speakers communicate effectively using embodiments of many shared experiences, which they received throughout their lives. These actually often reflect their individual character traits, social (professional) identities or/and group memberships.

There is a small table beside the front door where the gifts and cards have been deposited. Ralph unwraps Helen's present, and draws the stainless steel abacus from its box. 'Ah, what I've always wanted,' he says. 'Thank you very much'.

'I thought it might come in useful when the millennium bug strikes,' says Helen.

'I saw a cartoon the other day, with two ancient Romans looking at one at one of these,' he says, sliding a few ball-bearings along the top wire of the abacus with his forefinger, 'and one is saying to the other, "I'm afraid it's going to crash when we move from BC to AD".'

'Seriously,' says Helen. 'Aren't you worried? I read somewhere that on January 1ˢᵗ 2000 everything will stop. Planes will fall out of the sky, ships go round and round in circles, operating theatres will go dark, supermarkets will run out of food and nobody will get paid their wages or their pensions.'

'Alarmist talk and millennium fever,' says Ralph. 'There is a problem with some of the big old main-frame computers, but it'll be sorted out.'

'I'm rather sorry to hear you say that,' says Helen. 'There's something rather poetically satisfying about the idea of modern civilization being undone by its own technology.'

'Well, you wouldn't much enjoy being pushed back into the Middle Ages overnight, I can tell you,' he says [13, c. 137].

The conversation reveals that the speakers obviously have different ideas about the role modern technologies play at present. Such linguistic expressions *as the millennium fever, millennium bug, alarmist talk* indicate the approach of the year 2000 with numerous predictions of the crash scenario.

The application of the theoretical framework to a contextual analysis of texts leads to several conclusions: first, it involves most of the categories or properties of context models. In addition to the so called parameter categories of setting (time, location), the analysis displays the context modelling of the speakers' identities and their social roles. Second, much of the social and communicative interaction is predetermined by the context models due to a number of socio-political aspects. Third, cultural and national characteristics are to be taken into account as well. Thus, in the perspective of social cognition, the concept of context models is extended from cognitive features of various kinds of personal (and social shared) knowledge to social features that involve dimensions of social beliefs and social relations.

In conclusion, context models predetermine both linguistic representation of the event, that is the topic, which is objectivized in the textual world model, and reflection of the communicative event or situation including the settings (time and space) and speakers (social identities). The results obtained reveal the interdependence and mutual influence of social context and text, seen as conditioned by a number of factors and shown via the context analysis. The results prove the subjective, on-going construing of the speakers' identity that greatly contribute to the use of language devices, choice of topics, style and behavior patterns of the speakers in the communicative interaction.

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