

COGNITIVE CONTEXTS AS BASIS OF SIGNIFICATION IN DISCOURSE SEMIOSIS

1. Introduction.

The problem of Context acquires the new research perspectives in the light of an actual cognitive-discourse paradigm, focused on the problem of discourse structures' cognitive motivation by correlating communicative, social-semiotic, verbal components of discourse semiosis.

The article bases on the following scientific reproaches:

(a) The cognitive-discourse theory by T.A. Van Dijk [20-22] relating the frames and situational models of communicants to dominant ideological, social and institutional contexts;

(b) Conceptions of dialogicality and heteroglossia by M. Bakhtin [1] substantiating the comprehensive intertextuality of any written or spoken texts by "otherness" circulation;

(c) Concept of framing and participation structures in E. Goffman's sense [9; 10];

(d) H. Sacks' Membership Categorization Analysis [17] and theories of identity [4-6; 13; 16; 24] related to cognitive basis of the communicants' self-identification with certain categories;

(e) Positioning theory [8, p. 43-63; 15; 19; 23] studying the situational discourse behavior in a format of universal and ethno-specific macro scenarios revealing intertextual basis of the communicants' roles;

(f) Y. Lotman's idea of produced and decoded meanings mismatch due to addressee / addresser texts' is omorphism to different semiotic spheres [3].

All above approaches to a greater or lesser extent deal with cognitive contexts (i.e. social-semiotic, communicative, interactive, and cultural-semiotic) viewed as the cognitive basis of the text signification.

The article aims at investigating the function of cognitive contexts and their corresponding codes in discourse semiosis.

II. Cognitive contexts and their codes.

Lotman's and Bakhtin's theories as well as the notion of the communicants' situational mode determining variabilities in their referent interpretation strongly suggests that the sign generated by the addressee does not duplicate that of the speaker. The speaker's meaning replacement or modification by the recipient's sign bases on their different conceptualization the relationship between the code and the object / situation / state of things.

However both communicative signs are in a relationship of equivalence since a listener's interpretation results from conceptualization context the speaker considers relevant for his interlocutor to recognize the fitting meaning. Any intention is conscious, i.e. determined by the cognitive context of the speaker and

his ideas about the “shared” addresser context – due to the communicative nature of an intention. Therefore, an interaction based on presupposing of communicants’ cognitive contexts is isomorphism and, more broadly, their world models intersection. Pragmatic basis of interaction consists in an author’s intention to make his text interpretable through the inclusion of new “knowledge” in the addressee’s background information. An author presumes what contexts are available to the addressee and chooses a code allowing the listener to draw the “correct” inference, without spending extra efforts [18]. The listener interprets a message finding affordable context.

Therefore, the participants’ cognitive contexts are viewed as their conceptualization spaces, mediating all other components of the discursive semiosis both at the level of the meaning construction and its interpretation. Variability in text interpretation and mismatch of the author-addressee meanings result from addressee’s attraction of “unforeseen” contexts and interpretative codes.

The article distinguishes the main cognitive contexts mediating sign-and-object (real or belonging to “possible world”) relationship in literary text, i.e.: (1) Interactive context (2) Communicative context; (3) Social-Semiotic context; (4) Membership context; (5) Context of intertextual role macrosenarios; (6) Cultural-semiotic context; (6) immediate and macro Textual context.

Each cognitive context is indexed by a code indicating the aspect of the context meant by the author, who implies here with that the reader is aware of the whole context (that is, the communicants share certain background knowledge as members of a social or linguistic-cultural group). A code is a part of the intention, its verbal semiotic realization, because the intention presupposes not only the goal, but also the means of its implementation. The choice of code is affected by the motives and goals, which, in turn, are determined by situational, interpersonal, and other contexts.

From the perspective of our semiotic conception [14], a code is a complex semiotic resource that is not limited to the verbal level. Understanding contexts as mental constructs suggests a correlation between contexts and their indicating multilevel codes.

Interactive context as a cognitive basis for the “author-reader” relationships incorporates in formation assessed according to the archetypic dichotomy of “own-alien”. Such context may include knowledge about “author-reader” belonging to the common / alien group, sharing the same / different esthetic, ideological, “common sense” and other values. Focus on the specific reader is indexed by artistic method, genre, and all textual figurative codes. In pragmatic perspective [2; 7; 11] such codes correspond to the concept of co-operation (whether an author is co-operative or estranged from a reader) and positive / negative politeness. Despite the specificity of literary discourse, it is still communication, in which the author tries to find a «face-saving» balance between “how to please and evoke interest” (which, in the end, relate to the “positive” politeness and desire to meet the needs

and interests of the reader), and “how to preserve own "territory", aesthetic autonomy, with individual author's face, not adjusting to the "average" reader.

Accordingly, interactive context is provided by communicative context as knowledge of universal and sociocultural norms of communication and interaction: universal rules of communication (cooperative maxims) and implicational consequences of their violation [11], genre prototypes [20], politeness strategies and maxims [7], social and institutional role invariants [24]; ethno-cultural and sub-cultural conventions, etc. Besides, communicative context includes, in our opinion, the rules of all cognitive contexts combination to adapt them to the specific speech event.

For example, focus on the reader might be indexed by politeness strategies, i.e. (a) marks of intimization indicating positive politeness and (b) means of generalization, passivation, impersonalization, hedging, pessimism, etc. which increase the “author-reader” distance indicating negative politeness. The relation to the reader might also be indexed by the author’s observance or violation of cooperative Maxims, i.e. Quantity (dominancy of explicit or implicit means), Quality (to what degree an author is sincere and truthful with the addressee), Relevance (for example, an author may deviate from this maxim applying stream of consciousness means, non-linearity, discontinuity, interruptions, pauses, etc.), the latter resulting in Maxim of style adherence or violation.

The next two contexts relate to communicants’ self-identification with identity categories, based on both (a) role socialization practices and (b) cultural (textual) macro-scenarios of the communicative behavior. The first context we denote as *Membership Context* patterning all totality of previous dialogic practices of the author meeting the socio-communicative expectations of others. The second is *Context of intertextual macrosenarios* derived from all semiotic products of the ethnos and civilization – from fairy tales and cartoons to the theatre, fiction, etc. contributed to the author’ identity construction. Both contexts constitute a cognitive basis for the choice and alignment of characters in the text and the patterns of their interaction.

Context of intertextual macrosenarios is closely connected to *Cultural-semiotic context* of culturally “recognized” canons of the referent’s interpretation involved by an author / speaker in order to align his vision of the situation or the state of affairs with the addressers’ cultural world models. This code includes the intertextual means at the content-semantic, genre, stylistic, structural and compositional text levels, i.e. intersection of the motives, allusions, plots, composition, topics, subjects, precedent phenomena as well as the concepts, arguments, role invariants.

Social semiotic context is a combination of frames and situational models defined by dominant discourses, i.e. political and institutional ideology, consumer ideology of "common sense" as well as the ideology of the dominant philosophical and aesthetic paradigm and its corresponding method. Such context is indexed by any means manifesting the stereotypes – in artistic techniques, way of thinking, assessments, etc.

III. Conclusion.

The text conceptualization both at the level of the meaning construction and its interpretation is mediated by the communicators' cognitive contexts: (1) interactive context (2) communicative context; (3) social-semiotic context; (4) membership context; (5) context of intertextual role macro scenarios; (6) cultural-semiotic context; (6) immediate and macro textual contexts. Each context corresponds to a certain aspect of conceptualization of the text referent or "author-reader" relations and indexed by pragmatic, role, intertextual, symbolic-stereotypical codes indicating the aspect of the context meant by the author.

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Анотація

Кравченко Н.К. Когнітивні контексти як основа сигніфікації в дискурсивному семіозисі.

У статті виявлено функцію когнітивних контекстів і відповідних їм кодів в процесі означення художнім текстом свого референта в дискурсивному семіозисі. Проаналізовані сім основних типів когнітивних контекстів, кожний з яких «відповідає» за певний аспект концептуалізації референта або відносин між автором і читачем. Описані інтерактивний, комунікативний, соціо-семіотичний, культурно-семіотичний контексти, а також контекст ідентифікації автором / читачем свого членства в соціальній, культурно-естетичній та ін. групах та контекст інтертекстуальних макросценаріїв комунікативно-рольової поведінки.

Ключові слова: когнітивний контекст, код, концептуалізація, дискурсивний семіозис, художній текст.

Аннотация

Кравченко Н.К. Когнитивные контексты как основа сигнификации в дискурсивном семіозисе.

В статье выявлена функция когнитивных контекстов и соответствующих им кодов в процессе означивания художественным текстом своего референта в дискурсивном семіозисе. Проанализированы семь основных типов когнитивных контекстов, каждый из которых «отвечает» за определенный аспект концептуализации референта или отношений между автором и читателем. Описаны интерактивный, коммуникативный, социо-семиотический, культурно-семиотический контексты, а также контекст идентификации автором / читателем своего членства в социальной, культурно-эстетической и др. группах и контекст интертекстуальных макросценариев коммуникативно-ролевого поведения.

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Abstract

Kravchenko N.K. Cognitive contexts as basis of signification in discourse semiosis.

The article aims at investigating the function of cognitive contexts and their corresponding codes in discourse semiosis. The text conceptualization both at the level of the meaning construction and its interpretation is mediated by the communicators' cognitive backgrounds, i.e. interactive; communicative; social-semiotic; identity membership intertextual role macro scenarios; cultural-semiotic; textual contexts. Each context corresponds to a certain aspect of conceptualization of the text referent or "author-reader" relations and are indexed by pragmatic, role, intertextual, symbolic-stereotypical codes indicating the aspect of the context meant by the author, who implies that the reader is aware of the whole context.

Interactive context as a cognitive basis for the "author-reader" relationships incorporates information assessed according to the archetypic dichotomy of "own-alien". The author of literary discourse tries to find a «face-saving» balance between "how to please and evoke interest" (which, in the end, relates to the "positive" politeness and desire to meet the needs and interests of the reader), and "how to preserve own "territory", aesthetic autonomy, with individual author's face, not adjusting to the "average" reader.

Interactive context is provided by communicative context as knowledge of universal and sociocultural norms of communication and interaction: cooperative maxims and implicational consequences of their violation; genre prototypes; politeness strategies and maxims; social and institutional role invariants; ethno-cultural and sub-cultural conventions, etc. Besides, communicative context includes the rules of all cognitive contexts combination to adapt them to the specific speech event.

Membership context patterns all totality of previous dialogic practices of the author meeting the socio-communicative expectations of others. Context of intertextual macro scenarios derives from all semiotic products of the ethnos and civilization – from fairy tales and cartoons to the theatre, fiction, etc. contributed to the author' identity construction. Both contexts constitute a cognitive basis for the choice and alignment of characters in the text and the patterns of their interaction.

Cultural-semiotic context involves the culturally "recognized" canons of the referent's interpretation involved by an author / speaker in order to align his vision of the situation or the state of affairs with the addressers' cultural world models. This code includes the intertextual means at the content-semantic, genre, stylistic, structural and compositional text levels, i.e. intersection of the motives, allusions, plots, composition, topics, subjects, precedent phenomena as well as the concepts, arguments, role invariants.

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Key words: cognitive context, cod, conceptualization, discourse semiosis, literary text.