

TEXT AND DISCOURSE: BETWEEN SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS OF COGNITIVE LINGUOPOETICS

Nikolai Fyodorovich Alefirenko*, Irina Ivanovna Chumak-Zhun,
Elena Grigorievna Ozerova, Kira Konstantinovna Stebunova

Belgorod State University, Belgorod (RUSSIA)

*Corresponding author: alefirenko@bsu.edu.ru

DOI: 10.7813/jil.2015/6-2/31

Received: 18 Jan, 2015

Accepted: 14 Mar, 2015

ABSTRACT

The article explores the problem of understanding the three main concepts, which are crucial for modern discourse analysis, – text, discourse, and speech. The authors argue that these categories are basic for linguopoetics and exist in functional unity. The discourse verbally and cogitatively reflects the actual world picture in our minds. The text is the first and the most important and actually observable means of its verbal representation. Another means is the communicative eventive environment where the text is created. Different approaches to these two terms, their role and function in the discourse analysis are briefly observed.

Key words: text, discourse, verbal and cogitative process, speech activity

1. INTRODUCTION

Discourse, as a mechanism of social communication, since its very inception among the urgent and difficultly solved by the humanitarian science facilities is at the level of extremely contradictory interpretations [1, 2]. Often both concepts – the text and the discourse – form the Scylla and Charybdis of modern linguopoetics: a) on the one hand, they are identified without a moment's doubt; b) on the other hand, they are diametrically opposed [3]. Such unwanted methodological turbulence is explained by the fact that the attempts to interpret the essence of discourse have been taken by different modern European linguistic schools and directions, coexisting within a common methodological strategy which is to replace the orthodox structuralism with the principles of the anthropocentric linguistics [4]. In our understanding, the discourse is the subjective verbal and cogitative reflection of the world picture in our minds. The most important means of its verbal representation is a verbal text, a primary entity, initially existing reality of any humanitarian discipline. For its study, a set of heterogeneous knowledge and methods are used, called philology in general, linguistics and literary studies in particular. All-humanitarian meaning of the theory of a literary text boils down to the fact that it simulates intentionally conditioned axiological and semantic space of a person [5], of a world picture purposefully created by them. It is they who are mostly the main source of the literary text content.

Verbal text, in its traditional sense, is an ordered set of sentences-utterances¹ aimed to express a certain semantic content. Mechanisms of text generation and perception in terms of *topic*, *subtopic* and *idea* are studied in the framework of text linguistics and psycholinguistics.

The second, equally important aspect of text understanding appears to be the communicative eventive environment where in its depths a text is born and formed. It is during the search of the essence of this phenomenon when the notion "discourse" emerged in the writings of French scientists. The verbal and cogitative processes, occurring within the communicative eventive environment, we call the discursive activity, which is the main subject of cognitive linguopoetics.

Despite originally philological sense of language study and inexhaustible attention to the text at the hands of Russian and foreign scientists, the discourse analysis emerged only in the mid-twentieth century as a logical extension of ideas, which had been united by the previous discipline – text linguistics.

In recent times, in the area of verbal art there are some attempts to cross the line of the semantic content of the text and to bring into the scope of research the collective artistic experience of all participants in discursive activity: the author, readers, characters, etc. From the point of the discursive approach [6], the text is not enough to be considered as a separate and locked meaningful formation, because by its nature it closely contacts with other objects. The objects of that kind form both the environment and conditions of the text formation and functioning. This means that the text, being a linear derivation, is non-linear and simultaneously conjugated with several systems, forming together a kind of synergistic space. It (1) exists in close connection with the reality; (2) is implicitly and explicitly linked to other texts, forming the so-called intertextuality; (3) interacts with a receptive mind of the reader, which not only provides the understanding of its semantic content, but also creates its own imaginary object; (4) exists in our minds as a kind of interpretative background, which not only explains the subtle parts of its content, but also identifies the implicit, hidden meanings [7].

Indeed, the text a) is perceived creatively, b) is subject to the understanding, c) its content is subject to apperception, i.e. is linked to previously acquired reader's experience, d) reveals the relationship with other texts, e) the idiosyncrasy and genre originality of the text are determined [8], f) belonging to a particular artistic aesthetic system of verbal art (literary school or trend) is realized. As a result of such multifaceted activity, the text ceases to belong to the individual consciousness (author's or reader's one) and becomes an integral part of the ethno-cultural consciousness of the corresponding nation.

¹ In accordance with the differentiation between language and speech the sentence is considered to be the unit of language, and the utterance is stated to be the unit of speech.

2. METHOD

Cognitive and discursive analysis; identifying semantic potential of literary discourse in the course of combining nominative language units in the text; linguo-cognitive analysis of value and semantic content of a literary text; conjugation of cognitive and contextual analyses.

3. MAIN PART

1. The text. For linguistics, a text is the first and most valuable object of study. Indeed, all texts as the products of speech and language, as a system of means of verbal communication are two sides of the same coin [9]. Without the text, in its broadest sense, it is impossible to investigate the language. The fact is that the language is not available for direct observation and study. You can only study the processes of speaking and understanding, in other words, the speech activity, the speech and speech products – texts. Beyond the studying texts it is difficult to study the language system. The language is something that is objectively inherent in the given linguistic material and is manifested in the individual speech systems, which arise under the influence of linguistic material. The description of the language system is carried out from the text to a system, i. e. from the directly observable syntagmatic properties of language units to understanding their paradigmatics (a system).

A text (Latin *textus* 'tissue', 'plexus') is quite a complex phenomenon. Usually, the text is understood as a sequence of linguistic signs, united by the semantic connections. Its main properties are connectedness (cohesion, coherence) and wholeness. The basic unit of text is a super-phrasal unity, which poses a combination of several meaningfully and syntactically connected sentences, developing one main theme or idea. There are some means of the text connectedness which are usually noted, such as: (a) grammatical means (unity of time and person, the peculiarities of the verb forms, modality et al.); (b) the uniformity of the vocabulary; (c) the sequence of themes and rhemes; (d) the coreference (the subordination of all elements to one theme) and (e) various lexical connecting means (repetition, synonyms, et al.). Due to these properties, the text is characterized by the unity of its form and content. The form of the text and, more broadly, of the communication has recently become the subject of another branch of text science – the theory of speech genres. As examples of speech genres an anecdote, a gossip, a rumour, a prayer, a graffiti and all sorts of etiquette statements can be considered.

It is well-known that the characteristics of speech genres were first defined by M.M. Bakhtin. These are typical for each of them communicative situation, expression and expressive intonation, volume, the rapport of words' meanings and the actual reality, the concept of the addressant and the concept of the addressee. We speak only with certain speech genres, M. Bakhtin marked. These speech genres are given to us almost as much as we are given the native language.

In addition to the direct ones, the indirect speech genres are defined: rhetorical or exam questions (the examiner knows the answer to his question himself), the ultimatum (cp. common denunciation), the confession as a genre of journalism (cp. confession in the church). Many speech genres are indirect. Among the indirect speech genres there are flirting, fun, hint, small talk, jokes, and sarcasm.

The nature of the text content depends on the semantic conception of the text-creating subject, which is also called the aim, the plan, the communicative intentions (Latin. *intendere* 'undertake', 'contemplate'). Semantic orientations are transmitted by various means of the text: by lexis (particles, parenthetical word, etc.), by changing the words order, by intonation (for voiced and oral texts), as well as by special graphical tools (underlining, bolding, punctuation, including the author's punctuation). The task of the recipient is to "unravel" the communicative intentions of the text creator – the author or the speaker. Understanding of language units and their combinations is subject primarily to this purpose. An important role is played by the so-called presuppositions – the fund of knowledge, common both for the sender and the recipient of the text. Depending on the subject of the study (some or other components of text generation and text perception), our science has formed such disciplines as linguistics of the text, the text structure, the text hermeneutics (Greek. *hermeneutike* 'interpretation', 'art') and others. By the way, they can be considered as branches that exist within a single discipline – the theory of the text.

According to a broadside approach, the text is the same thing as the speech. However, realizing that after all the text and speech are not equivalent notions, the author points out the narrow understanding of the text. In the narrow view, the text is a unit of speech. However, none of these approaches to determining the text does not resolve all issues related to its linguistic status. In fact, except the text, the sentences-utterances, paragraphs, and super-phrasal unities refer to speech units, too. Moreover, according to common practice, each unit of speech corresponds to the certain unit of language: the utterance, for example, corresponds to the sentence; the lexical item (lexeme) corresponds to the word form. What kind of language system unit is the text related to? The situation is exacerbated by the attempts of some scholars to consider the text itself as a unit of the language system. So, T.M. Nikolaeva defines the text as unified by the semantic relationships sequence of iconic items, as the "language in action". However, the text could be considered as a unit of language only in case if it is reproducible. In fact, the text in its traditional sense is the reproducible speech formation. And the producibility, as we know, is the main feature of speech phenomena.

In the existing concept of the relation between the linguistic and speech units, the text does not meet the criteria by which certain segments of speech production are summarized and abstracted into the units of language. It is believed that they do not have mandatory for language units feature of reproducibility. You can certainly find decent counterarguments, referring to the units with dual status. The sentence, for example, is both the unit of language (generalized structural set of sentences <...>, which is able, in particular, to serve as the material for the observation of facts of the given language, and the unit of speech.

Since the mid-twentieth century, the idea is substantiated that language and text are in a mediated relationship; in order to understand the essence of this relationship the notion of "discourse" is used.

2. The discourse. In Rusistics, the term "discourse" is polysemic [10] [11]. It has been borrowed from French (often through English), where it approximately nominates the term what is denoted by the Russian word *speech* and term *functional style*. What is the need of its use? Does it duplicate the Russian terms? This question inevitably arises before everyone who calls first to the term etymology and to the content expressed by it: discourse (Latin *discursus* 'run about', 'movement', 'circulation', 'conversation') is the speech, the process of linguistic activity, a way of speaking. The ambiguity of the term allows using the discursive analysis in a number of humanities, which subject directly or indirectly involves the study of the language functioning: linguistics, literary criticism, semiotics, sociology, philosophy, ethnology and anthropology [12].

As we can see, the discourse is a broader concept than the text. Since this is both a process of the speech activity and its result (a text), the discourse became explored as a communicative event.

Scientific foundations for the study of discourse were built by the French and Anglo-American schools [13-15]. In the middle of the twentieth century, the theory of discourse has been actively developed in the Russian linguistics as a continuation of text linguistics. The fact is that by that time the search for the nature and essence of units, which are, on the one hand, wider than the sentence, and on the other hand, do not pack up into the concept of "text", became impossible in terms of the research categories of the text theory. The solution to this problem is attached to the discourse analysis, especially because such mentioned text characteristic, as coherence and integrity, not only do not contradict the essence of the discourse, but also have much in common with its categorial attributes.

However, this congruence should be considered as external, as by their internal organization these two phenomena are still different. If the text coherence and integrity concerns formal and semantic regularities of its construction, these properties of discourse reflect the cognitive and pragmatic nature of the verbal and cogitative structures (Eng. *cognitive* 'related to knowledge'; Greek. *pragma* 'business, action'). The followers of text linguistics may argue that texts do not lack cognitive and pragmatic properties. Not accidentally, T.M. Nikolaeva marked: "Discourse is the polysemic term of text linguistics, which is used by several authors in the almost homonymous meanings. The most important of them are: 1) a coherent text, 2) oral form of the text, 3) a dialogue, 4) a group of utterances which are connected with each other within their meaning, 5) a speech product as a written or oral entity" [16]. Even more widely the discourse is understood by Y.S. Stepanov, who brings into this category the entire set of texts, where particular grammar, special lexicon, special rules of usage and syntax, particular semantics, finally, a special world are noticeable. Yet even with such understanding the discourse remains within the text linguistics.

Indeed, the text and the discourse have many common or adjacent properties. But that's where the difference is, we think. The text is essentially the linear formation: it is, as already mentioned, the integrated with the meaning sequence of tokens. The nature of discourse is defined by its non-linear organization. This allows considering it in terms of the linguistic synergy, the science that studies complex and open self-developing systems. This approach differs significantly from the discourse analysis, which is proposed by foreign linguistic schools, which, however, also has the right to be used in the practice of linguistic research. Thus, modern linguistics also explores the "genre" interpretation "of the non-linear text", according to which the discourse is the verbal and cogitative activity and its products (the works of a given author, scientific publications and books, politic and cultural speeches through the mass media, business letters, and religious sermons) which are a means of mutual communicative influence. In this regard, several types of discourse are identified: (1) institutional, or, according to Roland Barthes, socialized, (2) personal, (3) research, (4) publicistic, (5) juridical (6) political and (7) philosophical, etc. Each of them has linguistic, semantic and pragmatic characteristics.

4. CONCLUSION

Along with the above understanding, the developed theory of cognitive linguopoetics defines the discourse as a complex communicative and cognitive phenomena, which includes not only the text but also various extra-linguistic factors (knowledge of the world, opinions, values) that are important for understanding and perception of information [17]. Its smallest speech elements are the utterances, and the extralinguistic components include described events, the participants of these events and the circumstances surrounding them. Understanding an utterance as an "atom of discourse", after Michel Foucault, we try to determine the components and the limits of the utterance. The utterance is a sequence of phrases confined in two semantic spaces, in two pauses in oral communication. In this sense, the utterance is like "two-faced Janus": according to the mechanism of its generation, the utterance is a text, and according to the text-creating conditions, it is a discourse.

Proceeding from this approach, it is also advisable to involve the speech act theory, ethnography of communication and linguo-pragmatics in the study of discourse. However, despite the originality of this theory the discourse should not be dramatically separated from language [18]. After all, in fact, a discursive space we live in is in close interaction with the language system: the language flows into the discourse, discourse flows back into the language. As A.-J. Greimas figuratively wrote, they are likely to hold onto each other, like the palms during the "Chinese burn". The scientist believes that the distinction between language and discourse is in the intermediate step which should be ultimately abdicated. Apparently, we must first give up the hard opposition of language and discourse, not to consider it the final phase of the study, because language, discourse and speech are conjugate phenomena, which ensure general success in verbal and cogitative human activity.

The most succinctly the proposed scheme is interpreted as follows: a discourse is the process, the environment and the condition of text creating; a text is the product of discourse; a language is the system of units that serve as the most important means of discursive activity, which results in the text.

In conclusion, a quite unexpected, innovative interpretation of discourse by Y.S. Stepanov can be mentioned. He believes that the world of discourse "has its own rules of synonymous substitutions, its own rules of truth, its own etiquette. It is a possible (an alternative) world" [19] (emphasis added – *the authors*). Yet the discourse, according to our view, is a complex communicative phenomenon that includes, in addition to text, extralinguistic information. Under the supervision of discourse there are both communication and pragmatic situations. Their communicative plan is converted to the cognitive state of communicants, and the pragmatic plan refers to speech use. Thus, the theory of discourse makes it possible to simulate typical communicative situations and "scenarios" of knowledge representation in the text.

Therefore, the interaction of speech, speech act and discourse reveals a certain conjugation. Discourse is a verbal and cogitative space, where extralinguistic categories (knowledge of the world, events, opinions, values) coexist along with the speech utterances. At the same time it represents a complex system of knowledge which is formed and expressed by means of signs of language and signs of speech: nominative, relative, symbolic and figurative means of the literary text creation.

REFERENCES

1. Derrida, Zh., 2000. Struktura, znak i igra v diskurse gumanitarnykh nauk. In Francuzskaya semiotika: Ot strukturalizma k poststrukturalizmu / per. s fr. i vstup. st. G.K. Kosikova. Progress, pp: 407-420. (In Russian).

2. Kozhemyakin, E.A., 2013. Diskursnyj podhod k izucheniyu kulturym. Sovremennyj diskursivnyj analiz. Elektronnyj zhurnal, 10. Date views 12.01.2015 www.discourseanalysis.org (In Russian).
3. Chernyavskaya, V.E., 2014. Fantomy i sindromy diskursivnoj paradigmy. In Voprosy kognitivnoj lingvistiki. #1, pp: 54-61. (In Russian).
4. Alefirenko, N.F., 2014. Formation and Development of Discourse Linguistic Theory. In XLinguae. European Scientific Language Journal, 7 (2): 32-45.
5. Ozerova, E.G., 2012. Russkij lirikoprozaicheskiy tekst: diskursivno-kognitivnyj aspekt: monografiya. Izd-vo NIU "BelGU", pp: 276. (In Russian).
6. Chumak-Zhun, I.I., 2014. Interpretaciya pojeticheskogo teksta: diskursivnyj podhod. In Problemy gumanitarnogo obrazovaniya: filologiya, zhurnalistika, istoriya: Sbornik nauchnyh statej Mezhdunarodnoj nauchno-prakticheskoj konferencii. Izd-vo PGU, pp: 289-294. (In Russian).
7. Black, M., 1962. Models and metaphors studies in language and philosophy. N.Y.; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 280 p.
8. Alefirenko, N.F., Gallo, Yan, 2014. Pragmatika hudozhestvennogo diskursa i rechevye shanry. In Acta slavica. Brno, pp: 12-17. (In Russian).
9. Sokolová, J., 2012. Tri aspekty verbálneho textu. Nitra: Univerzita Konštantína Filozofa, pp: 144.
10. Makarov, M.L., 2003. Osnovy teorii diskursa. Gnozis, pp: 280. (In Russian).
11. Osipov, G. A., 2011. Vzgl'yady i tendencii v sovremennoj teorii diskursa. In Vestnik Adygejskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Seriya 2: Filologiya i iskusstvovedenie, 1: 125-128. (In Russian).
12. Van Dijk, T.A., 2009. Critical Discourse Studies; A Sociocognitive Approach In: Ruth Wodak & Michael Meyer (Eds.), Methods of critical discourse analysis. London, Sage, pp: 62-85.
13. Chafe, W., 1994. Discourse, consciousness of time. Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, pp: 311.
14. Van Dijk, T.A., 2007. Discourse as social interaction: a new journal to pidge two fields. Discourse and communication. 1(1), pp: 7.
15. Bruner, Jerome, 1990. Acts of Meaning / Four Lectures on Mind and Culture. Harvard University Press, pp: 179.
16. Nikolaeva, T.M., 1978. Lingvistika teksta: sovremennoye sostoyaniye i perspektivy. In Novoye v zarubezhnoj lingvistike. Vyp. 8: Lingvistika teksta. Progress, pp: 5-44. (In Russian).
17. Van Dijk, T.A., 2012. Discourse and Knowledge. In: James Paul Gee & Michael Handford (Eds.), Handbook of Discourse Analysis. London, Routledge, pp: 587-603.
18. Sokolová, J., Korina, N., 2013. Čelovek – Jazyk – Diskurs. Očerki ob orientacii v prostranstve jazyka i reči. Saarbrücken: Palmarium Academic Publishing, pp: 206.
19. Stepanov, Y.S., 1995. Alternativnyi mir, Diskurs, Fakt i printsip Prichinnosti. Yasyk i nauka kontsa XX veka. Sb. statei. RGGU, pp: 432. (In Russian).