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THE SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION TEXTS

Today, the study of the information texts' semiotic nature acquires special relevance in connection with the change of the form and type of the information itself, related to the global communication processes. In this connection, the purpose of this scientific research was to designate the fundamental role of the sign and meaning problem in modern information texts. The main methodological tools for the study of semiotic models in this work were the concepts of the signs by Ch. Pierce and Ch. Morgan, as well as the linguistic theories of F. de Saussure. The author reveals the essence of the semiotic model through the prism of studying two main interconnected semiotic problems. The first is to identify the nature of the sign, the mystery of its origin, the modeling of the sign situation, the possibility of the motivated signs' existence, the relationship of meaning and reason; the second is to denote the problem of specific information facts' semiotic analysis, in which the original is such a concept as «semiosphere», acting as a space for the implementation of continuous birth and development of meanings processes during the interaction of different languages and texts. The value of the study lies in the identification of the main signs and symbols of information texts as the main means of communication and a special activity of modern global human being, communicating through electronic means. Thus, the practical significance of the work is determined by the possibility of applying the results of the study in the formation and further development of a full-fledged information society that is ascending signs as a priority in communication processes as key components of human culture, in which individuals give them certain meanings, significance and value.

Keywords: sign, symbol, communicative model, text, structuralism.

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Ақпараттық мәтіндерді семиотикалық талдау

Бүгінгі таңда ақпараттық мәтіндердің семиотикалық сипатын зерттеу жаһандық коммуникативтік процестермен арақатынастағы ақпараттың өзінің нысаны мен түрінің өзгеруіне байланысты ерекше релеванттылыққа ие болып отыр. Осыған байланысты, осы ғылыми зерттеудің мақсаты қазіргі заманғы ақпараттық мәтіндердегі таңба мен мән проблемасының іргелі рөлін белгілеу болды. Бұл жұмыстағы семиотикалық үлгілерді зерттеудің негізгі әдіснамалық құралдары Ч. Пирс пен Ч. Морган белгілерінің тұжырымдамалары, сондай-ақ Ф. де Соссюрдің лингвистикалық теориялары болды. Автор өзара байланысты екі басты семиотикалық проблеманы зерттеу призмасы арқылы семиотикалық модельдің мәнді мазмұнын ашты. Біріншісі, таңбаның табиғатын, оның шығу тегі құпиясын сәйкестендіруді, таңбалық жағдайды модельдеу, дәлелді белгілердің болу мүмкіндігін, мән мен мағынаның арақатынасын; екіншісі, түрлі тілдер мен мәтіндердің өзара іс-қимылы барысында үздіксіз туу және мағыналарды дамыту процестерін жүзеге асыру үшін кеңістік ретінде әрекет ететін «семиосфера» деген ұғым бастапқы болып табылатын нақты ақпараттық фактілерді семиотикалық талдау проблемасын білдіреді. Зерттеудің құндылығы электрондық құралдар арқылы коммуникативтік процестерді жүзеге асыратын қазіргі жаһандық адам қызметінің басты құралы және ерекше түрі ретінде ақпараттық мәтіндердің негізгі белгілері мен символдарын анықтау болып табылады. Осылайша, жұмыстың практикалық мәні адамзат мәдениетінің түйінді құрамдас бөліктері ретінде коммуникациялық процестердің басымдығына белгілерді көтерген толыққанды ақпараттық қоғамды қалыптастыру және одан әрі дамыту мәселелерінде зерттеу нәтижелерін қолдану мүмкіндігімен айқындалады, онда дара кәсіпкерлер оларға белгілі бір мағыналар, мән мен құндылық береді.

Түйін сөздер: таңба, символ, коммуникативтік модель, мәтін, структурализм.

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Семиотический анализ информационных текстов

На сегодняшний день исследование семиотического характера информационных текстов приобретает особую релевантность в связи с изменением формы и вида самой информации, соотносящейся с глобальными коммуникативными процессами. В связи с этим, целью данного научного исследования стало обозначение фундаментальной роли проблемы знака и значения в современных информационных текстах. Основными методологическими инструментами изучения семиотических моделей в данной работе стали концепции знаков Ч. Пирса и Ч. Моргана, а также лингвистические теории Ф. де Соссюра. Автором раскрыто существенное содержание семиотической модели через призму изучения двух главных взаимосвязанных семиотических проблем. Первая, заключающаяся в идентификации природы знака, тайны его происхождения, моделирования знаковой ситуации, возможности существования мотивированных знаков, соотношения значения и смысла; вторая, обозначающая проблему семиотического анализа конкретных информационных фактов, в которой исходным является такое понятие как «семиосфера», выступающая в качестве пространства для осуществления процессов непрерывного рождения и развития смыслов в ходе взаимодействия различных языков и текстов. Ценность исследования заключается в выявлении основных знаков и символов информационных текстов как главного средства сообщения и особого вида деятельности современного глобального человека, осуществляющего коммуникативные процессы посредством электронных средств. Таким образом, практическое значение работы определяется возможностью применения результатов исследования в вопросах формирования и дальнейшего развития полноценного информационного общества, вознесшего знаки в приоритет коммуникационных процессов как ключевых составляющих человеческой культуры, в которой индивиды придают им определенные смыслы, значение и ценность.

Ключевые слова: знак, символ, коммуникативная модель, текст, структурализм.

Introduction

In its most general form, semiotics is defined as the science of signs, iconic systems and their functioning in culture. However, the question of whether it is possible to bring together all the available information on a symbolic method of information communication is hardly an affirmative answer. There are no generally accepted definitions of such basic semiotic categories as meaning, significance, symbol, etc., so their use should be accompanied by a sufficiently extensive commentary each time. Nevertheless, every encyclopedic dictionary on cultural science includes a special discipline called “semiotics”, and this circumstance obliges to think of this science as a sort of slim whole. The shape of this whole always depends on the position of the observer, on the direction in which the research view permeates the thickness of semiotic processes and concepts of semiosis. The absence of an absolute point of reference is compensated by the goal’s presence. The goal is determined by the context in which semiotics as a discipline is included. In the context of the research analysis, the research’s author will be interested in specifics of semiotic approach to information and communicative culture in general.

Justification of the choice of articles and goals and objectives

The development of new information technologies leads to multiple expansion deepens the communication penetration into the consciousness of the information consumer. Thus, the modern person in his daily life becomes more and more dependent on mass communication, which creates for him a new form of subjective reality, the influence of which is no less important than the influence of objective reality. New means of communication make information about the human environment; every new person is connected to the global information network. Man gets an ability to accommodate and absorb into himself all data of the world. In this aspect the content of information, which is translated through mass-media is getting one of the most important aspects for human mind correlation, which is radically changes lifestyle style, values, forms of social organization, the reality of perception senses. That’s why the analysis of modern information text’s nature is represented as a relevant topic for scientific research today.

Scientific research methodology

As a methodological basis, the author uses the conceptual apparatus of linguistic theories, the focus of which is the problems of constructing communication processes, as well as the conceptual arsenal, developed within the framework of structural and semiotic theories.

The author analyzed the arsenal of semiotics by Ch. Pierce and Ch. Morris, linguistic-communication theory of Ferdinand de Saussure, “intertextuality” concept by Julia Kristeva, also the linguistical points of J. Lotman, L. Hjelmslev, J. Stepanov and E. Gorny. Such approaches as structuralism, post-structuralism and symbolism were considered too.

Results and discussion

To analyze specifics of semiotic approach to information, it is necessary to address, at least in basic terms, two interrelated semiotic problems. First, the problem of defining a sign, the mystery of its origin, the modeling of a sign situation, various variants of signs classification, the possibility of the existence of motivated signs, the relationship between the concepts of meaning and sense. Secondly, the problem of semiotic analysis of specific facts of culture, in which the initial understanding of culture as a “semiosphere”, i.e. as space of continuous meaning in the process of interaction of different languages and texts.

The most common, classical definition of semiotics is the definition by object: semiotics is termed as “the science of signs and sign systems, symbolic (using signs) behavior and iconic – linguistic and non-linguistic communication” (Levit, 1998: 194). The well-known Russian semiotician J. Stepanov wrote: “Semiotics finds its objects everywhere, in language, mathematics, fiction, literature, architecture, apartment layout, family organization, processes of subconsciousness, communication of animal, plant life. But everywhere its direct subject is the information system, i.e., the system that carries the information, and the elementary core of a sign system. Whatever such systems may be, whether they exist in society, in nature or in man (his organism, thought and psyche), they are subject to semiotics” (Stepanov, 1983: 5).

The second common definition of semiotics is the definition by method. E. Gorny writes: “Semiotics is the application of linguistic methods to objects other than natural language”. What does that mean? It means that semiotics is some way of view-

ing anything as designed and functioning like language. This “like” is the essence of the method. Everything can be described as a language (or as having its own language): kinship system, card games, gestures and facial expressions, cooking, religious rituals and insect behavior. Semiotics, therefore, is the transfer of the metaphor of a language to any non-linguistic (from the point of view of the usual, “non-semiotics” consciousness) phenomena. One of the principles on which semiotics is based on the expansion of the meaning of linguistic terms. Thus, the semiotics method is the consideration of anything as a metaphor of language or, to put it differently, a “metaphorical description of what is acceptable but as a language” (Gorny, 1996: 3).

Among the methodological techniques successfully used in all cases of recourse to the arsenal of semiotics, it is impossible not to mention the division of semiotics into three parts introduced by Ch. Pierce and developed by Ch. Morris. These three parts are semantics, syntactics, pragmatics. Semantics deals with the relation of signs to what they denote, i.e. denotations, meanings, names. Syntactics examines ways of combining signs leading ultimately to the generation of texts. Its subject is the syntaxis and grammar of different iconic systems. Pragmatics deals with the relationship of sign and person (communicator or recipient). “The term ‘sign’ is a term of semiotics in general, it is impossible to define it within syntactics, semantics or pragmatics alone; only when the term ‘semiotic’ is used very widely it can be said that all the terms of these disciplines are semiotic terms” (Morris, 1982: 50 – 51).

But if we look more closely at the definitions of semiotics, the question arises: who makes the distinction between signs and non-signs and what are signs? In semiotics two historical understandings of the sign essence have evolved: one – logical-philosophic, ascending to Ch. Pierce (Pirs, 2000); the other – linguistic-communication, ascending to Ferdinand de Saussure (Saussure, 1999). According to the first approach, the sign is an object (word, image, symbol, signal, thing, physical phenomenon, and so on) replacing another material or ideal object in the processes of cognition and communication. The logic researchers started to name the object represented by the sign as the denotation; the concept (designate) was called the mental concept of the denotate, more precisely, of the whole class of denotates, lived in the subject of the iconic activity. According to the second approach, the sign is the unity of signified and signifier, otherwise – “the connection of the concept and the acoustic image”.

An acoustic image is a name (word) given by people to one or another concept or psychic image. And the name and the object marked by it are related to each other conventionally by agreement between people. F. de Saussure referred to the fact that words denoting the same thing, such as the “table”, sound differently in different languages.

The sign is not born suddenly, in nature itself there are possibilities for its appearance. Interactions of objects and creatures can occur directly, and can also mediate. There are three types of signs according to their degree of proximity to the original object: signs, signals and actual signs. The color of the vegetable or fruit is a sign of maturity or freshness (and vice versa). Smoke signals the presence of fire. Here, the sign acts as a substitute for the object. Natural signs are not used intensively or intentionally. A person is also characterized by unintentional signs: shaking hands gives out excitement, redness of the cheeks is a shame, etc. A good communicator can predict the course of a conversation and its result by the appearance of the interlocutor, and even the hidden intentions of another communicator. At the same time, most of the human signs are purposeful signs and they are intentional, directed at some object.

There are three types of signs, namely iconic, indexical and symbolic in relation to the meaning:

- iconic signs are images, they have a natural resemblance to the object, although quite conventional (icon, painting, photo graphics);
- indexical indicate the object (finger, arrow, shout);
- symbolic signs are conditional, unrelated to the object, metaphorical, replace the object denoted in discourse and thought (words, some allegories: eagle, donkey, bear, etc.).

In addition, communication signs are divided into:

- single character-symbols, for example, separate gestures (not mime or gesture, but a separate gesture), real symbols such as amulet, wedding ring, trademark, state symbols;
- languages are symbolic systems in which meaningful lexical units and sentences are constructed from codes (letters, numbers, symbols) using grammatical rules.

The language is set in the form of codes – a member sounds (phoneme) or alpha-vita letters (grapheme) and rules of operation with codes – grammar (syntaxis).

But how is it that some form (a shaking of the air with a human speech device, drawing on a sheet

of paper, a photograph, a cave image, etc.) can mean something to someone, and this value can influence on the opinions and actions of people? Maybe this value is “inside” of these signs?

The question of meaning was the main and most paradoxical question of communication theory and all humanitarian knowledge. But first, let’s introduce two terms widely used in linguistics thanks to the XX century Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev: a plan of expression and a plan of the sign content, in a simplified sense (for verbal language), is sound and meaning, for other forms of communication, is the outer shell of the sign (visual image, architectural structure, gesture, act or event, pictogram, etc.) and again is meaning. Semiotics, or semiology, is thus the science of meaningful forms, means of expressing sense. The naive consciousness in the process of using language does not separate these two planes – expression and content. However, scientific analysis inevitably encounters these two sides of the sign, their interrelationships and interrelations. Primitive consciousness (proved by numerous observations of ethnography on ritual actions) does not only share sounds and meanings, but also identifies an object with a word or other symbol denoting it. It was possible to recall conspiracies, witchcraft, when actions over symbols were considered capable of changing the existing status of things.

Even ancient philosophers have formulated two approaches to the relation of sounding and meaning: either this relation is given by nature or by establishment. That is, words are related to the objects to be denoted (sounding with meaning) according to native necessity, almost deterministic natural regularity. Or vice versa: words are not naturally related to objects, and their meaning is attributed to their sound according to the original established agreement. There is still no exhaustive answer to the question about the relationship between word and thing, the sound and meaning, the plan of expression and the plan of the sign content in various communication systems. Moreover, two fundamentally different approaches to the issue had emerged in modern semiotics. The first approach was based on the idea that the label was fundamentally unmotivated and arbitrated. This means that there is no necessary, fundamental connection between sound and meaning. The principle of the unmotivated sign is advanced as the first fundamental law of semiotics, linguistics and communication theory. The second approach focuses on another property of the sign, that is, its motivation, its internal shape, etc.

E. Gorny as a representative of the first approach wrote: "...There are many conditions that determine where and when we consider or don't consider some thing as a sign. This suggests that the significance is inherently relative, it is derived from some other factors (psychological, social, cultural, etc.). Semiotics, however, is interested in the phenomenon of signs as such. Therefore, it circumvented that rule and treated signs regardless of the conditions that gave rise to it. The problem of things and, accordingly, the problem of the sign-thing relation is not in fact a semiotic problem" (Gorny, 1996: 4). As a counterbalance to him, another well-known semiotician J. Stepanov believed that "the correlation of original, primary terms predicates with extralinguistic reality which is a problem of semiotics. It is here that considered as the most important point of modern semiotics" (Stepanov, 1983: 10).

The combination of these two approaches should be understood broadly. But the sign, as a mediator between the world and man, the sphere of objects and the sphere of meanings, cannot but feel influences from both sides in all respects. The arbitrariness of the sign was not absolute or relevant. This conflict can be resolved by entering the time and position of the sender or receiver. Before the use (creation) of a sign, the sender has a field of possible choice, after the use (creation) of the sign, it is already a fact to be interpreted by the recipient.

In structural linguistics, language was seen as a complex symbolic system that could be studied independently of its history, focusing on the already established structural elements and ways of combining them. It is the synchronous language slices that have become the preferred field of structural linguistics. A distinctive feature of the structural linguistics is the search for objective patterns hidden in a mass of varied empirical material. It had proved necessary to have a strict and abstract terminology for the expression of legal relationships, allowing generalizations and typologies. Such concepts as "structure", "universals", "sign", "paradigm", "phoneme", "morpheme", etc. have become key in modern linguistics. In addition to abstract terms, structural formulas and symbolic models were used, and the ideal was to use mathematics, first, mathematic logic. According to this, semiotics is implemented in many different ways. These approaches conditionally divided into three directions, according to how they define the text and its relationship with meaning and sense: structuralism, poststructuralism and symbolism.

In structuralism, the text is considered "self-fulfilling" and "complex organized thing" as a kind of quasi-spatial configurations formed by formal elements of different order. The text is thought of as a hierarchy of levels. A formal (i.e. structure) is what generates meaning. The hierarchy of the elements and the relationships between them are thought to exist up to and independent of any analytical procedure. The recipient or analyst only detect what is contained in the text" (Gorny, 1996: 7). The structural explanation of the text is based on the following premises:

- the structures underlying the text are unconscious and objective;
- they exist independently of the observer;
- they are characterized by differences and opposition;
- they are universal and act as basic schemes or matrices that determine the possibility of discursive and functioning of any entity of consciousness;
- they are organized as a language;
- they can be investigated by semiotics as meta-linguistics.

On the basis of these provisions, the representatives of structuralism in the development of cultural problems focused on the analysis of various complexes of cultural texts. Taking as a maximum task the identification of standing behind the symbolic and meaningful diversity of texts of structural unity, generated by universal human rules of education structuralists sought to distinguish from the entire body of cultural texts and iconic systems those in which certain similarities could be seen, suggesting the presence of an internal structure.

The work of J. Lotman "Semiosphere" is an example of structuralist analysis of the text. The central idea of book is the text as a meaningful device; through it the problem of autocommunication, and rhetoric are understood in these ways: "author – auditory", "idea – text" (Lotman, 2000: 37). Accordingly, the semiosphere is interpreted as a complex hierarchy of semiotic spaces or as the relationship of the "center – periphery" of the cultural universe; through the system of such representations can be understood and typology of cultures, and intercultural dialogue, and mechanisms of cultural borrowing and interaction; the very exchange of texts between cultures looks like a mechanization of meaning (e.g., in host culture).

The text, according to J. Lotman, like a grain containing a program for future development, is not frozen and invariably equal to itself. The intrinsic unknownness of its structure creates a reserve

for its dynamics, influenced by contacts with new contexts.

The second semiotic approach to the text is poststructuralism. "Attention shifts to the relationship between the texts. The notion of the text was being universalized: it was being said more or less categorically that the whole world was a text. The elements that make up a single text are thought of as being borrowed from or referring to other texts. Not the immanent structure, but reference and quotation become the main object of interest and generator of text values. The analysis is not directed to the relationship between the elements within the text, but to the relationship between the elements and their constellations within the "semiotic universe", which contains all real and potential texts" (Gorny, 1996: 13). The boundaries of the individual text, within the framework of this approach, are blurred, dissolved in limitless "intertextuality".

The term 'intertext' and, as a symbol of general property, "intertextuality" were introduced for the first time in a number of papers by the postmodern theorist Julia Kristeva since 1967 year. Roland Bart gave the classical formulation to these concepts: "Each text is an intertext; other texts are presented at different levels in more or less recognizable forms: texts of pre-existing culture and texts of surrounding culture. Each text represented a new fabric woven from old quotes. Fragments of cultural codes, formulas, rhythmic structures, fragments of social idioms, etc. are all absorbed in the text and mixed in it, since there is always a language before and around the text. As a necessary precondition for any text, intertextuality could not be reduced to the problem of precision and influence; it was a general field of anonymous formulas whose origins could rarely be detected, unconscious or without quotation marks" (Bart, 1994: 224).

We cannot fail to note here the attitude of poststructuralism to the symbol. The sign stands out as the complete opposite of itself – it is not an indication of any object or meaning, but, on the contrary, an indication of its absence. The sign and meaning turn into a fiction, a simulacrum, masking the absence of actual meaning and offering instead its many connotations. French philosopher and sociologist Jean Baudrillard postulated four theoretical stages of transformation of a sign into a simulacrum, succeeding from the Renaissance to modernity: a sign denoting reality; a sign distorting, masking reality; a sign masking the absence of reality; sign-fiction, unrelated to reality; sign and language are

its own objective existing space, unrelated to neither man nor reality. The sign means nothing or means only itself, but in human communication it co-preserves the properties of the simulacrum, determining the person; the sign becomes the field where the discourse of power is realized. Accordingly, the meaning and creation of the text is "production of fiction", the fixation of meaning that does not correspond to itself (Baudrillard, 2003: 124).

In conclusion of reasoning about the poststructuralist understanding of text generation, there is the total openness of the text in intertextuality in essence turns into its semantic emptiness. This emptiness can be arbitrarily filled by a reader using different inverting codes, i.e. the texts through which he reads the text. If verification criteria were blurred, as in deconstructionism, there would be a crisis of truth. With the loss of orientation accompanying this crisis, the world-text begins to seem to have lost any (certain) meaning. In contrast to structuralists, poststructuralists describe their textual practice not in terms of "science", but in terms of play and escape from the power of language. The whole "intertextualism" is based on the idea of culture as a reservoir of values understood in the sense of information, i.e. in the nature of this knowledge. Therefore, the procedure for finding formal linguistic similarities (quotations, paraphrases, etc.) allows for the conclusion of similarities or identities in the meaning of the text segments to be compared. Culture is reduced here to "ready-made knowledge", parts of which migrate from one text to another, which forms the "life" of culture.

The third approach, which is symbolic, referring to the work of M. Mamardashvili and A. Piatigorsky "Symbol and Consciousness", deals with the study of the problem of emergence of special iconic structures (symbols) from some non- or pre- sign reality. By the authors this reality is decimated with the sphere of consciousness. In others, for example, in psychoanalysis, it is identified with nature (opposite to culture) and is denoted as "life", "instinct", "desire" etc. In other words, attention is shifted to the boundaries of the field of culture. The main problem with this type of approach is the constant evasion of the unimportant, which, once in the sphere of analysis, is immediately signified, thus, losing the identity. This leads to the fact that the analyst has to deal with secondary developed and cultural forms, and not at all with "natural phenomena" (Mamardashvili, 1997: 155).

Conclusion

To conclude the analysis of information texts in semiotic way, it is necessary to emphasize that communication in this approach is understood mainly as the movement of meanings in social space and time. Special attention is given to the means of communication in connection with this understanding of the nature of communication. Indeed, any communication, in addition to the content it reports, has the form of an expression of that content, enshrined

in some signs, symbols, which, potentially, can be used by everything that a person deals with. If there is no sign, there is no communication and a special kind of activity. The world of communication, the world of human culture is inextricably connected with the field of signs and symbols as phenomena of an objective, “material” world, truth, phenomena of a special kind, because they have a value, meaning, value. This aspect of communicative culture as a means of communication, as a carrier of meanings is the main subject of semiotics research.

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