

ISSA Proceedings 1998 - Sustainable Development: New Paradigms In Discourse Linguistics



The main concern of this presentation is to outline those tendencies in linguistic approach to discourse analysis as they are seen from the perspective of the new ideas of open systems. First, there will be discussed some major facts that are taken into account as background for dynamic analysis of texts: the idea of the Noosphere, preference of the term paradigm applied to dynamic analysis . Then we shall deal with three main tendencies in discourse linguistics connected with open systems which are all connected with reconstruction of discourse configurations that have an integral character. Finally we shall dwell on the main similarities that of discourse paradigms.

1. Sustainable development is a term and concept that implies certain interdisciplinary global approach of vision of nature and man by both sciences and the humanities. This term is one of the most radical ones that allows Prothagor's old formula. 'Man is a measure of all things' to be understood in a different way at the turn of this millenium - man, being the measure should be concerned with reasonable attitudes to natural and social spheres of his activity so that man sustains his development. Antropocentric ideas of communication turn to Noocentric founded on the basis of dialogue systems. Modern complex social and political configurations in contemporary society bring forth the problem of communication on a very specific level - dialogue is considered to be not only an interactive means of information exchange between people but as a means of interactive activity between men, nature and mind. This interaction is carried through the language. The language becomes a certain liaison between man and different forms of life thus reflecting changes in types and methods of communication.

In Russia the idea of reasonable attitudes is connected with the concept of the Nooshere ("the sphere of reason"). The term was suggested by Eduourd le Roy

(1870-1954) and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) and taken by Vladimir I. Vernadsky (1863-1945) when he came to Paris to work in Sorbonne. According to Vernadsky the Noosphere is a new evolutionary condition of the biosphere in which there should be met certain ecological and social orders. Vernadsky wrote that from evidence of global upheavals in both the natural and social indivisibility the only imperative is uniting humanity under the auspice of science. It was science that he ascribed a special role to in the transition to the Noosphere.

He thought that science has a strongest universal binding force as being the realm where humanity has appeared to make continuous progress. This sounds very idealistic, of course, but it should be born in mind that Vernadsky was the man who launched research programs on radioactivity and radioactive elements by founding the Radium Research Institute and he was very much concerned with the utilization of atomic energy. His theory thus stands at the very intersection of the most powerful trends of the modern and postmodern world.

The concept of the Noosphere arose as a result of confluence of several creative streams. The first is the concept of the Biosphere as one which considers the view of all living matter (with the global view of material), and second is the concept of humanistic knowledge. These concepts had an integral conception of development. One cannot deny that the idea of reasonable attitude to social discourse is the core idea in the Noosphere that gave an impetus for a number of new linguistic paradigms. Analytical and pragmatic research paradigms tend to change their orientation from anthropocentric to more socio- and ecologically centric ideas.

These paradigms are based on the principles of complex dynamic and open systems of non-linear type where time and space come as one integral part. Professor Prigogine's work has become an inspiration for new generations of analysts in pointing out that chaotic phenomenon are unpredictable by definition. This does not necessarily mean coherent ontological development but rather the temptation to match natural and artificial intelligence studies. It is not improvement of the existing analytical practices but finding new explanatory apparatus. In this case we tend to stick to the term paradigm as a more suitable one, allowing on one hand the lack of standard interpretations and using old terms on the other. This means that the sciences of chaos and complex self-organized systems that rank nowadays very high among scholars can give enough of mobility for not just setting rigid rules for analysis but for solving meaning puzzles in quite different scholarly environment.

The transition from an old paradigm to a new one is a cumulative process. Successions of paradigms are incoherent in many ways. If we take the history of science, then "Newton's mechanics improves on Aristotel's and that of Einstein's improves on Newton's as instruments for puzzle-solving". "... but in some important respects "Einstein's general theory of relativity is closer to Aristotel's than either of them is to Newton's" (Kuhn 1970:206-207). Paradigms of sustainable development are connected with open functional systems elements of which have certain energy to destabilize the whole system. These elements may have weakly or strongly interactive character and discourse paradigms cannot but envisage them.

1. The Argumentation theory as an integrated discipline is connected with the development of philosophical and linguistic problems in respect of civilizing influence of discourse on the society. This process is defined in its turn by changing strategies and tactics of power, which has a legitimate right to manipulate human behavior. This brings forth the idea of argumentation in the evolution of the society. Here we mean not necessarily political institutions but discursive practices at large that influence mentality. Ideological discourse includes science, literature, and mass media. Nowadays we revision the view of the ideological discourse as a closed system of logical schemes helping manipulating language users. The process of modeling communicative situations becomes an open system in many ways. It involves interpretation as a procedural work that becomes possible because of inherent potential of elements to have an ability to participate in schemes and model formation. This rather bulky statement means that in our linguistic approach to discourse we are to bear in mind complexity of system that becomes a subject of the study. Analytical paradigms are no longer reflecting the potentials language material.

Rhetorical and dialectical approaches are seen as close to each other. Both are concerned with the problems of persuasion. If we take the methodology of dialogism of the text (Bakhtin 1986) any utterance can be looked upon as an argumentative text as any utterance is not entirely an act of choice but it is an answer to another utterance that precedes it. Dialogism does not envision an absolute separation of text producing and text perception as both of them deal with the act of influencing other people. Whenever we take a text as an influential phenomenon we are turning to discourse. The sphere of rhetoric is connected with winning the favorable position in the confrontation and this seems contrary to the dialectical aim of dispute resolution. This contradiction brings dialogue

system into movement. Though contradialectics is not permitted in this kind of reconstruction, this is not always the case (Eemeren, Houtlosser 1998).

Rhetorical and argumentative aspects are integrated into one another through language use. In this case if we take everyday conversations logical rationality is discussed as related to the criterion of acceptability which is related which is done through various types of relevance: propositional, illocutionary, elocutionary and perlocutionary (Rees 1996).

Besides rhetorical and dialectical aspects there appear cognitive patterns of arguments which can be defined in terms of types. They can be abstracted from any particular content showing the procedures involved. Examples of types or patterns as A.Blair called them are as following: inductive arguments from analogy, appeals to authority, generalizations of many kinds, arguments from rules and principles, arguments from implications, from sequences and precedents (Blair 1990). There is one more abstraction that is involved in this type of approach that is the relation between what is stated as a premise and what is stated as a standpoint. Thus the argumentative discourse may be analyzed as an interconnection of logical, rhetorical levels plus schematic interconnection. It is the aim of a linguist using types or schemes to find language instruments that these schemes are based (Tretyakova 1995).

2. Another type of linguistic paradigm which attracts linguists connected with sustainable development is quantum linguistics. It is developed through the showing of intertextual phenomena and various salient features of the text. The main principle in physical theories is using relativism between laboratory experiment and mathematical or other theoretical interpretation as it was done by Werner Heisenberg and Niels Bohr. For a linguist it is important to deal with the idea of presentation that the founders of quantum theory had. For example, Heisenberg's book "Physical Principles of Quantum Theory" is of a very specific character as abstract theory is done in a manner that can be understood as philosophy or poetics of time and space speculations. By this here we would like to stress special influence of scientific texts on the development of other diverse theories in far-fetched fields. From the very beginning Quantum theory was a baffle in its presentation because theoretical "elementariness" was appealing to many people involved in social sciences and this produced a number of hoaxes as it was easily implemented into literary analysis. Here Noosperic ideas lie in the approach of implementation one scientific paradigm to another field of research. Unlike ironic "Transgressing boundaries" by Alan Sakal (1996) we would like to

stress that this new approach does not necessarily mean a blind implementation of all physical and mathematical concepts into linguistic analysis but rather the possibility of diverse interpreting schemes applied to the text.

Quantum scientific apparatus introduced to poetics give linguists an opportunity to look for quantum energy sense elements. Thus it is possible to show the analogy existing between the functions of discrete quanta transmitting radial light energy and the elements of poetic texts transmitting aesthetic information. This paradigm is in accordance with Florensky's thesis of discontinuity, Bakhtin's dialogism and Zhyrmunsky's definition of poetics as depending on the reader's impression. The possibilities of the approach can be demonstrated by identifying sense quanta in Pushkin and Pasternak poems devoted to the figure of Russian tsar Peter where Quantum analysis allows constructing impressions of Stalin epoch. Here again a linguistic paradigm helps disclosing salient features of sense formation and sense interpretation using the idea of time meaning (impression) and relevance. Unlike a post-modernistic approach to the analysis of the text when the text was not integrity but a structural model this type of textual interpretation includes mentalistic reflections such as phnemosphere of Florensky (Arnold 1998).

Noospheric ideas are taken not mechanically but as rudiments belonging to another sphere that is Semiosphere as a sign space. It has certain limitation (otgranichennost) which are defined through the number of interpretive "filters" and irregularity (neravnomernost) that is the intrusion of heterogeneous texts. Open and esoteric approaches are studied in this approach. This semiosphere as a part of semiotics is a kind of linguistic programme that involves rhetoric studies and stylistics as interpretive structures based on intertextuality. Sustainable development from a linguistic view in this approach is carried out through sign-sense-interpretation modeling. (Lotman 1992).

3. One more linguistic paradigm connected with open dynamic system is connected with the idiomaticity of human interaction. Idiom structures that linguists studied from the nominalistic point of view can be presented as elements of dynamic systems. They are developing their semantic potentials through constant use in certain linguistic environment. These idiomatic or pragma-idiomatic expressions are discourse instruments, shifters, organizing speech on one hand and they are micro systems accumulating communicative situation models. Thus they make in language a social interactive system, open and dynamic. These small elements in this case may be looked at as minidiscourses

that cover the domain of ritual, communication through conversational formulas, prescriptive domain through imperatives, evaluation domain through replies and comments. On one hand they belong to the semiosphere as they are signes (indexes and symbols) reflecting human behavioral habits. On the other hand they are interactional units that should meet all demands of relevance when used in communication process. For example, in the process of Argumentation such expressions are used too, e.g. anyway, even (Snoek-Henkemmans 1995). Their open system is dependent on time and space of the functioning potentials that they have. Dialectics of this kind of phrases lies in the fluctuations they have within the language - being either used as communicative expressive devices or as nominative elements. Their sustainable development depends much on time and social environment and the existing language repertoire. The language seldom invents new elements but uses the old ones in a new environment. A linguistic paradigm should take into account discursive character of these structures.

Among semiotic systems social semiotics is of special importance for finding a special place for these structures and as semantic elements which are relevant to dialogical use that matters most for finding systemic features of these idioms. A means of understanding (interpretation) together with the mode of thinking provide a linguist with of expressive language. This type of the paradigm is based on interactively conditioned interpretive systems. Interpretation again comes as an energetic potential of an element that gives it possibility to take in the system a certain slot in a communicative frame. Frames may be defined in various ways according to social thesaurus that we have. Say, legal dialogue, feministic quarrel, political debate etc.

The process of acquiring the slot is connected with the procedures of interpretation. Procedural semantics allows defining know-how of communicative idioms showing sustainable development of this system. Thus we can proceed from the initial and conclusive meanings (*S init-S fin*). Procedural semantics as a method for description of dynamic system has several attractive features. For one thing, real time is included into analysis and then, literal meaning is not necessarily taken into account. This gives the opportunity to look at the language as a socially changing system. Next, recursive meaning is used as component of semantic description.

Finally, procedures allow using integral descriptions. of pragmatics and semantic elements. In conclusion it should be stressed that sustainable development in the discussed three paradigms as an approach to study open dynamic systems

presupposes involvement of integral procedural semantic interpretation.

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