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Original article



Practices for interpreting the models of discourse interactions (transdiscursivity) as revealed through discursive strategies

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Abstract

The practices of interpreting the concept of discourse can hardly be reduced to some general definitions. Based on the discursive analysis, it is quite pointless to try to finally find a single unified definition of discourse that would be shared by all linguists. Thus, the approach to understanding this term in the field of humanities leads to an analogy with Wittgenstein's concept of family resemblance since each of the interpretations of discourse is related to other concepts which leads to the construction of a complex network. It seems possible to reduce all these interpretations to a “common denominator”, as well as to assert the hypothesis that all these concept-notions underlie an essential and significant area of human activity. Thus, one of the tasks of the article is to examine the sphere of human practices designated by the definition of discourse which represent a very important phenomenon in human communicative activity. Another task is to describe the nature of interaction and interpenetration of discourses in the process of communicative practices. The article does not claim to have the only correct interpretation concerning the concept of discourse and the principles involving interpenetration of its types; the research and academic goals presented are rather an attempt to include several new cells in the already existing conceptual networks which are located in the linguo-philosophical space.

Keywords: discourse, discourse analysis, discourse interactions, discourse ontology, discursive strategies, genre of spoken and written speech, methodology, discourse theory, religious discourse, scientific discourse, speech

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Оригинальная научная статья

Методы интерпретации дискурсивных взаимодействий (явлений трансдискурсивности), выявляемых посредством дискурсивных стратегий

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Аннотация

Практику интерпретации понятия дискурса едва ли можно свести к каким-либо общим определениям. Исходя из дискурсивного анализа, совершенно бессмысленно пытаться окончательно найти единое универсальное определение дискурса, которое разделяли бы все лингвисты. Таким образом, подход к пониманию этого термина в гуманитарных науках приводит к аналогии с концепцией «семейного сходства» Витгенштейна, поскольку каждая из интерпретаций дискурса связана с другими понятиями, что приводит к построению сложной сети. Представляется возможным свести все интерпретации к «общему знаменателю», а также выдвинуть гипотезу о том, что все эти концепции лежат в основе существенной и значимой области человеческой деятельности. Таким образом, одной из задач работы является исследование сферы человеческих практик, обозначаемых определением дискурса, которые представляют собой очень важное явление в коммуникативной деятельности человека. Другая задача – описать характер взаимодействия и взаимопроникновения дискурсов в процессе коммуникативных практик. Статья не претендует на единственно верную интерпретацию понятия дискурса и принципов взаимопроникновения его типов; представленные исследовательские и академические цели скорее являются попыткой включить несколько новых элементов в уже существующие концептуальные сети, расположенные в лингвофилософском пространстве.

Ключевые слова: дискурс, дискурсивный анализ, дискурсивные взаимодействия, жанры устной и письменной речи, корпусная лингвистика, методология, научный дискурс, онтология дискурса, религиозный дискурс, речь, теория дискурса

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Bakhtin was the first to insist on the need for *metalinguistics*... – a discipline that deals with text and goes beyond the sentence where traditional linguistic analysis ends. The study of *discourse*, or extensive sections of speech, has become an important area of linguistics in recent decades.

It is not entirely clear whether it will be possible to single it out as a special discipline.

V. V. Ivanov

Introduction

At the previous stages of linguistic studies, *discourse* was understood as an area of communicative practices determined by a relatively fixed principle of construction and possessing lexical integrity. It should be pointed out that some conventionality remains due to the fact that the mentioned principle of general unification concerning interpretations of the concept and the boundaries of its subject area is defined very vaguely.

As a result, different discourses come into contact again and again; consequently, at a certain stage of contact, they begin to interact. This is a phenomenon of discourse transformation, or *transdiscursivity*, which will be the subject of special consideration at the subsequent stages of the article.

When considering the essence of discourse as a linguo-philosophical phenomenon, the article primarily proceeds from the interpretation by the scholar P. Serio, later generalized by Y. S. Stepanov [1, p. 35–73]. These scholars understand the phenomenon of discourse as a “language within a language”.

One of the central factors that caused this complex process, which has been intensively developing since the beginning of the 21st century, was the equally rapid development of discourse analysis itself as a comprehensive area within humanities.

M.M. Bakhtin also pointed out the need to study discursive space and to single it out as a specific scholarly field: “Bakhtin was the first to insist on the need for “metalinguistics” [...] — a discipline that deals with text and goes beyond the sentence where traditional linguistic analysis ends. The study of “discourse”, or extensive sections of speech, has become an important area of linguistics in recent decades. It is not entirely clear whether it will be possible to single it out as a special discipline” [2, p. 48]. Later, R. Barthes proposed the term *translinguistics* [3].

The basis for the conclusions about the role of discourse analysis in methods involving the teaching of language for professional purposes, as well as in the theory and practice of translation, were the studies of G. Bouchard, S. Brown, D. Gaskell, L. Gavioli, R. Carter, S. Carter-Thomas, T. Cobb, M. McCarthy, K. Hyland, and S. Hunston.

When conducting discursive analysis, this article relied on fundamental ideas and concepts of different scholars in the following areas:

- discursive analysis (V.I. Karasik, A.A. Kibrik, L.P. Ryzhova, V.I. Tyupa, V.E. Chernyavskaya, J. Swales, T.A. van Dijk, N. Fireclough, V.K. Bhatia) – a discursive approach to text analysis;
- communication theory (E.V. Aleshinskaya, E.V. Klyuev, G.G. Pocheptsov, A.M. Cheremisin, A.N. Yakubov) – development of a model of a communicative act;
- genre studies (L.G. Antonova, M. Voytak, V.V. Dementyev, L.R. Duskaeva, L.A. Zemtsova, I.V. Sherstyanykh) – typology and pragmatics of genres;
- pragmalinguistics (L.G. Vikulova, M.R. Zheltukhina, J. Austin, S.N. Plotnikova, E.F. Serebrennikova, J.R. Searle, J.S. Stepanov) – analysis of speech practices of interaction and influence.

Additionally, the study establishes that the use of various semiotic elements and mechanisms in a text indicating its categorization to a particular type of discourse.

Hopefully, the data obtained as a result of this research will contribute to the application of linguistic studies which seems to be urgent and primarily important.

Models of transdiscursivity in the religious and scientific discourses

To explain the problem considered in this article, it seems appropriate to characterize the ideal discourse: this investigation considers its fundamental characteristics to be internal unity with discrete boundaries.

The ideal discourse has four models of interaction: the conflict model, the synthesis model, the complementarity model, and the non-intersecting paths model [4, p. 1-30]. These four models are a paradigm that contains essential forms of transdiscursivity that seem possible for other discourses as well.

The first of these models – the conflict model – implies that the scientific and religious discourses are fundamentally incompatible and forms the foundation of the above-mentioned elimination project. In this regard, it should be pointed out that this model is widespread in the scientific and pseudo-scientific communities.

However, the Christian community has traditionally adopted a colonization strategy based on the synthesis model. The colonization model can be indeed regarded as a form of the synthesis model. The forms and types of colonization strategy within the framework of the religious discourse are “extremely numerous and diverse” [5, p. 27].

In the Christian discourse, this situation appears to be in many ways more complex than in the moral discourse where the very nature of colonization is often unexpected.

The initial premise is that the subject areas of both discourses are essentially identical; it follows that the ideas about the world revealed within the framework of the Christian discourse must correspond to scientific theories – “the nature of the correspondence, however, can be completely different” [6, p. 312].

An attempt to synthesize the two discourses was undertaken in medieval universities (in the area of scholasticism); this synthesis was based on the strategy of colonizing the scientific discourse by the religious discourse.

The objectives of this study include substantiating the hypothesis that any synthesis to one degree or another represents colonization – its subjects can be different.

Thus, it should be taken into account that, along with the presence of common subject areas, synthesis implies a “commonality of methodologies” [7, p. 92]. As a rule, this circumstance is not expressed directly and explicitly yet harmonization seems unattainable without this unification.

In other words, the correlation of two discourses and, moreover, their unification into a synthetic discourse becomes obvious only when methods of constructing objects implemented in them are consistent with each other. This article regards this phenomenon as a function of a connecting link, consequently uniting the two discourses.

The basis for this unification is the special role of metaphysics which partly reproduces the scientific discourse due to its being engaged in ideal modeling.

Thus, the scientific and religious discourses produce a unity by metaphysical discursive strategies with the help of their rational methods. “These methods are essentially quasi-rational” [8, p. 173] since it seems impossible to limit rationality to ideal modeling alone.

In this case, the conflict that could potentially lead to the elimination of one of the discourses and colonization are completely removed; however, at the same time, any interaction at all is excluded. Such a neutral relationship between the two discourses was developed by William of Ockham who fundamentally separated them, pointing out, firstly, the fundamental discrepancy between the subject areas, and secondly, the radical difference in the methods they use. The article does not focus on a detailed examination of Ockham's concept which would be a subject beyond the frameworks of the present research.

However, in such a situation, there is no need to talk about transdiscursivity as a phenomenon; the complementarity model in this regard turns out to be much more useful – its emergence should, in all likelihood, “be associated with the above-mentioned post-secular era” [9, p. 134].

The essence of the complementarity principle can be generally defined as an attempt to explain the relationship between man and the world in two ways: religious and scientific. It seems indisputable that both elimination and colonization are also examples of transdiscursivity to a certain extent although the article considers them as degenerate forms.

Communities that have adopted such strategies do not find it desirable for several discourses to exist simultaneously [10]; as a result, they strive to find such forms of transdiscursivity which will enable transformation from several discourses into one.

In the context of religion and science, the principle of complementarity has obviously not yet been fully understood as an essential and especially relevant possibility of interaction for the post-secular era. Despite the fact that many scholars have addressed the principle of complementarity, it was considered mainly in the theoretical or ideological aspect, i.e., researchers focused their attention primarily on its ontology [11, p. 79].

In some cases, the subject of consideration was methodology as a set of approaches to the disclosure of discourses and modeling of the corresponding subject areas. It seems highly doubtful that communication based on such principles exists; therefore, in all probability, it is only possible to speak of transdiscursivity in the proper sense of the word in relation to religion and science. B. A. Voskresensky made one of the few attempts of this kind: in his work, he examines the principle of complementarity within the framework of moral, Christian, and psychiatric discourses [12, p. 63–76]. However, transdiscursivity has a direct relationship to the interaction of communities; therefore,

true complementarity can only be discussed in terms of real communication between the Christian and scientific communities in which their identity and autonomy are not violated.

In relation of the non-intersecting paths model, at present, modern philosophers and psychologists question the stage-by-stage nature of this pattern, including non-discursive practices as a part of this; nevertheless, it seems entirely legitimate to speak of the following types of thinking reflecting the non-intersecting paths model [13].

In this connection, the American philosopher William James wrote: "The history of philosophy is to a large extent a clash of certain psychological temperaments [...] In reality, temperament influences the course of a philosopher's thoughts incomparably more strongly than any of his objective premises. The significance and persuasiveness [...] of certain arguments depend on temperament. The philosopher seeks a world that would correspond to his temperament and therefore believes in any picture of the world that suits it. He feels that people of the opposite temperament are not in harmony with the true essence of the world" [14, p. 11–12].

Further, James provides a comparative table of the qualities of "soft" and "hard" type thinkers; later, Carl Gustav Jung borrowed James' idea.

In his work *Psychological Types*, Jung called the "soft" type introverted and the "hard" type extroverted. According to James, the "soft" type is distinguished by monism (a tendency to view the world as a unity), while the "hard" type is a pluralist [14, p. 73]. This idea echoes the famous essay by J. Berlin "The Hedgehog and the Fox": "The fox knows many secrets, the hedgehog knows one – the most important one" [15, p. 185]. According to James, the "soft" type is also distinguished by idealism. In this regard, the article points out that at present there is no ideological ban on such a worldview which contributes to the spread of the teachings of idealists who believe in God, the immortal soul, and the metaphysical "subtle world".

In order to consider the essence of the ontology of the scientific discourse, it seems appropriate to recall the idea of regions of being developed by E. Husserl; in light of this concept, discourse appears as a phenomenon that reveals the semantic structures of a given region, based on the initial eidetic foundation. Husserl analyzes the mechanisms of this process in his work *The Beginning of Geometry* [16]. The basis of a specific area of the scientific discourse is ideal objectivity which further varies in the implementation concerning various acts of consciousness.

This is I. Kant's [17] analysis of productive imagination, according to which imagination itself, as described by the philosopher in the form of a "blind faculty", is non-discursive in nature. Imagination appears as a faculty of the soul that creates images in human consciousness based on certain schemas.

Thus, the phenomenon of discourse should be considered in its real manifestation in the form of types and in the course of their interaction and interpenetration (in the process of discourse transformation or transdiscursivity).

Results

This article was the result of scientific and practical necessity, first of all, due to the fact that since the beginning of the 21st century, significant changes have occurred in communicative linguistics, linguo-philosophy, theory and practice of translation, as well as methods for teaching of foreign languages for professional purposes.

Presently, new areas of linguistic research are developing quite intensively which have brought great changes to the field of humanities in general and to linguistic practice in particular [18, p. 19]. In this regard, this article considered discourse analysis on theoretical material as well as on a number of linguo-communicative practices which showed discourse analysis to be the most important factor in the development of modern linguistics and its related areas (such as linguo-philosophy).

Thus, discourse is speech immersed in life: the life context of discourse is modeled in the form of frames (typical situations) or scenarios (emphasizing the development of situations) [20, p. 21]. The article draws attention only to a relatively little-studied topic – discourse as a phenomenon of the linguistic and philosophical fields at the intersection of their spaces as regarded in the light of discursive interactions, analyzing the four models involving them.

With regard to the Christian discourse, it should be pointed out that in its nature one component can be traced which appears as inherent in this discourse itself (as a specific element). However, with a deeper analysis, this component can also be found in the scientific discourse.

This approach to the discourse interactions contributes to the awareness of a certain cyclical structure in its evolution, similar to the structure of the hermeneutic circle; it seems that the disclosure of its essence is realized in the process of solving specific linguo-philosophical problems associated with discourse.

Conclusion

A comprehensive study of the axiological nature of discursivity as a universal phenomenon from the standpoint of linguo-philosophy, sociolinguistics, and pragmalinguistics, as well as qualitative and quantitative discourse analysis, allowed the following conclusions to be drawn. Language communication, initially studied within the framework of narrow linguistic disciplines, became, at the beginning of the 21st century, the subject of study within interdisciplinary fields of knowledge – in particular, in linguo-philosophy.

In connection with the study concerning supra-linguistic layers of communication, the concept of discourse has begun to develop intensively which is defined in the article as a social practice denoting specific ways of representing various aspects of communication. The basis of discourse is a communicative act as a linguistic phenomenon. The linguo-philosophical approach to the study of discourse made it possible to identify various discursive genres that arise as a result of communicative events. The diversity involving communicative situations pertaining to this type contributes to interaction between types of discourses and their interpenetration.

The article points out that discourse interactions produce a whole system of objects while preserving their original meanings. Consequently, the disclosure of this ontology is a continuous clarification of knowledge about an aspect of reality significant for an individual. The initial idea, the pre-scientific grasp of the subject, is the fundamental foundation, which perhaps, has not yet formed the subject of objectifying analysis.

In connection with the breadth of Christianity's coverage as a religion and ontological form of thinking within huge scales of cultural and historical spaces, one of the most important tasks involving this research is to consider the Christian discourse as a phenomenon existing in the religious discourse.

Furthermore, the article states that there is a discursive community with its social institutions where the interactions between discourses can be traced clearly. This refers to all the four patterns or models of the discourse interactions. It is obvious that this common ontological basis seemingly unites and relates different types of discourse.

Non-discursive practices cannot be reduced to the mental sphere since they cover bodily, sensory-objective, and, apparently, spiritual components as well. In this regard, it should be noted that the objectivity of discourse, which underlies its ontology, appears precisely in the non-discursive area where it is actualized with the aim of being realized in discourse as something quite definite and expressible by linguistic devices.

However, in the sphere of religion, the relationship between discursive and non-discursive components seems especially significant for the reason that discourse is closely connected with the area of the inexpressible by means of language.

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